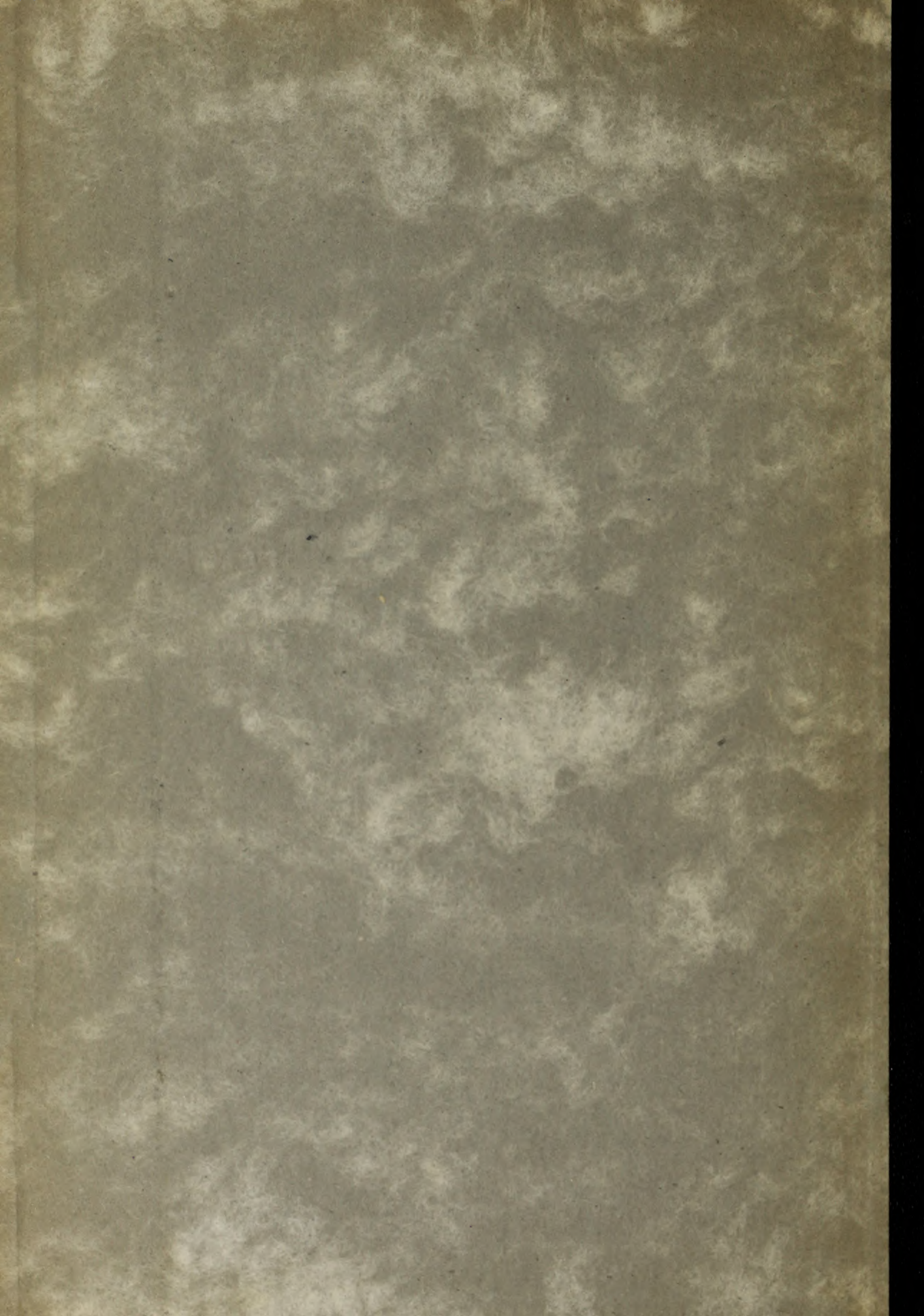


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K. E. Heater







BOSTON UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Thesis

THE THOUGHT DEVELOPMENT OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN VIEWED THROUGH  
HIS BIOGRAPHY AND WORKS

by

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(A.B., BOSTON UNIVERSITY, 1929)

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#### FOREWORD

This thesis contains a biography of Benjamin Franklin and a list of his principal works, offered as evidence supporting the body of the thesis which follows; "The Thought of Benjamin Franklin viewed through his Biography and Works."







## OUTLINE

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## I. BIOGRAPHY

### A. "Pre-Poor Richard Almanack" Days--1706-1732

Benjamin Franklin was born in Boston, January 17, 1706, the last son of Josiah and Abian Folger Franklin. His ancestors were natives of Northamptonshire in England, where for more than three hundred years, they had possessed a small landhold, to the products of which were added the profits of a forge. His father emigrated in 1682, be-

Birth, boy- hood, and young man- hood. Boston.	cause of certain non-conformist tendencies, and with his wife and children settled in Boston. Upon the death of his wife, Abrian Folger Franklin, Franklin married a second time, and from this union Benjamin
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\* was born. "Franklin was a man rightly named, and he well justified his name; for that word 'Franklin' signified a free man, a freeholder, enjoying on a little property of his own a rural and natural life." It was in Boston that Franklin passed his childhood, and here he obtained two short years of formal schooling. Home conversations, neighborhood meetings, and the Bible gave him, however, a good background. His father taught him religious sense, common sense, industry, simplicity, and frugality. Benjamin had been intended for the ministry, but his inclinations led him to desire a seafaring life and at the same time to develop a very real interest in reading. It was finally decided in 1717 that Benjamin should be apprenticed to his brother James, a Boston printer. This, at first, was not too great a hardship for the boy. All he wanted was to procure books and to find time to read them, all the while doing his work well. His reading consisted

\* Portraits of the Eighteenth Century; Sainte Beuve, page 312





of moralistic tales, "Plutarch's Lives", Cotton Mather's "Essays to Do Good", Daniel Defoe's "Essay on Projects", and the "Spectator Papers". From a detailed study of the last named work Franklin improved his vocabulary and obtained for himself a clear and precise style of writing.

At this time there appeared a series of articles supposed to be the work of Silence Dogood. They were anonymous, and their author, Benjamin Franklin, used to be greatly pleased when he overheard his brother and his brother's friends speak highly of them. He wrote quite a series of these articles and they were well received by the Boston readers. All of his literary efforts were not so successful. Benjamin wrote several poems. They were very poor and it is with charity that we call them poems. Ben's father fully recognized this fact and dissuaded the young boy from further attempts by pointing out the impoverished conditions of the majority of poets.

James Franklin, the owner of the shop, wrote several columns that offended the local authorities. Benjamin was concerned with at least one of these articles. He took part in a disgraceful attack on the Reverend Cotton Mather. In later life he was ashamed of this affair and quite humbly apologized for it. The columns that James wrote were of a more serious nature and resulted in an investigation, after which James was imprisoned and forbidden to continue his press. The two brothers were not the sort to be unduly dismayed. The public was surprised by an announcement that stated the cancellation of the apprenticeship bond, and a few lines to the effect that henceforth the "New England Courant" (James' Newspaper), would be published by Benjamin Franklin. The public did not know that James and Benjamin had





drawn up a secret bond, giving the control of the paper to James, and binding Ben as an apprentice for several years. Benjamin's management of the paper was extremely able, and he soon decided that he was quite as capable a printer as his brother was. He knew that many of his articles were better received than many of James'.

Franklin found time, during his busy days and evenings, for a little recreation. We have no doubt that the young Benjamin used to promenade the paths of the common with the pretty girls and gay apprentices. The New England Courant described the custom of Boston's young people: "The young girls spend the evenings and half the night \* in the search after, or in company with apprentice boys, young merchants, etc. They rise in the morning at about nine o'clock and having tucked their hair under a nightcap, and given a sleepy scowl or two at the glass they are ready for their breakfast, which great work being over they retire to their chambers, dress themselves till twelve and approve themselves till one. After dinner they frisk away to some known place of rendez-vous, where (at night) every Jack has his Jill, and every Jill has her Jack". Franklin lived the life of a normal young lad whose main interests were books and human companions. Franklin tells us that about this time a series of articles that were attempting to explain the fallacies of Deism came into his hands. He studied these and after pondering over them, became convinced in Deism. He adhered to this form of religious creed for a while, moving slowly away from this position to that of a "staunch doubter".

Benjamin Franklin was so successful as the publisher of the "Courant" that James became jealous of him. Ben did not help matters

\* The Apostle of Modern Times: Bernard Fay, page 36





either. He disliked the position of apprentice because he felt himself equal to James in ability and talent. The relations between the two became unbearable and finally Benjamin decided to run away. He  
\* tells us, "At length, a real difference arising between my brother and me, I took upon me to assert my freedom, presuming that he would not venture to produce the new indenture. It was not fair in me to take this advantage, and this I therefore consider one of the first errata of my life".

Franklin started for New York City. Here he attempted to secure a position as compositor in one Bradford's printing shop. Bradford had no opening and sent Benjamin on to Philadelphia implying that

he could probably obtain a position from William Bradford Philadelphia  
ford, his son. One fine Sunday morning in 1732 Franklin

arrived in Philadelphia. William Bradford could give him no work but Benjamin obtained a place in the printing house of Keimer, a German. Benjamin worked very hard and soon his industrious ways and interesting story came to the attention of Governor Keith of Pennsylvania. It was a proud moment for Ben when the Governor, with some friends, walked into Keimer's business house and inquired for him. After several meetings with Benjamin, the Governor suggested that Ben secure enough money from his father to set up a press in Philadelphia that would serve the colony well. Naturally Ben was flattered and fell in immediately with the plan. He went back to Boston in hope of obtaining financial help from his father. His father definitely refused to put up the money because he felt Benjamin was entirely too young to shoulder the responsibilities of a business. Brother James,

\* Benjamin Franklin's Autobiography; Macmillan's Pocket Classics, page 20





moreover, was jealous. Here was Benjamin, back in Boston, not as the repentant, but as a successful youngster, having money and flattering letters in his pockets. Ben returned to Philadelphia and on this journey occurred the second great "erratum" of his life. He had started out from Boston in the company of Collins, one of his oldest and best friends. Collins spent nearly half of his time in purchasing liquor, either on his own or borrowed money, and the remaining time in drinking it. Ben had to buy him out of many scrapes, and because of this he committed a betrayal of trust. In Newport, Rhode Island, Benjamin had received an injunction to collect a sum of money due to a friend of one of his brothers. He was to retain the money until he was instructed how to invest it. Benjamin collected the money but instead of retaining it he used it to get Collins out of various scrapes. Later he made up for this violation of trust.

Franklin stayed in Philadelphia for some months. He roomed at the boarding house of the Widow Read. She had a charming daughter, Deborah, with whom Franklin fell in love. They became engaged to marry.

Governor Keith still talked to Benjamin about the necessity of having another press in Philadelphia. He offered Benjamin money to buy a type set in London. He, furthermore, agreed to send some letters of introduction to his various friends in London in Ben's behalf. On the strength of these assurances Franklin left for London in the company of Ralph, a Philadelphia friend. Ralph was one of those unfortunates who possessed a slight talent for writing but who thought he possessed genius. Ralph had decided to accompany Ben at the last moment much to the latter's joy. Ralph felt that London would give his liter-





ary productions a more flattering reception than crude Philadelphia.

Ralph's wife was not so enthusiastic about Ralph's journey. She knew that once he broke away from her influence

that he would never return. He never did. When the two young men arrived in London, they found that Governor Keith had kept none of his promises. The only things they did meet were "bad beer, widespread luxury, swear words, and courtisans."

Ralph and Benjamin found lodgings in Little Britain. In their house lodged a young woman of gentle birth, a milliner. Ralph and she became intimate; they lived together for some time. He had no position and her income was insufficient to maintain them with her child, so Ralph left. Franklin visited her often, helping to alleviate her distresses and expenses. He, in turn, became intimate with the lady. She, because of some trouble with Franklin, wrote to Ralph and complained about Franklin's conduct. Ralph returned and told Benjamin that he considered all friendship between the two at an end. Franklin then changed his lodgings to the home of a widow, Mrs. Mary Stevenson. Here he formed a friendship with Mrs. Stevenson that lasted throughout his life.

Franklin on arriving in London had obtained a position with a London printing establishment. Here he encountered the custom of beer drinking. The compositors in the concern were accustomed to drink a great deal of beer during the day to gain, as they maintained, bodily strength. The compositors demanded of Ben five shillings as his share of the expense for the beer. Benjamin felt this an imposition because he did not drink. He finally submitted, convinced of the folly of be-

\* The Apostle of Modern Times; Bernard Fay, page 84





ing on ill terms with his associates, and realizing that he could easily  
\* make some money from this custom of theirs. He tells us, "I proposed  
some reasonable alterations in the chapel laws and carried them against  
all opposition. From my example a great many of them left their muddling  
breakfast of beer, bread, and cheese, finding they could with me be sup-  
plied from a neighboring house with a large porringer of hot-water gruel  
sprinkled with pepper, crumbled with bread, and a bit of butter in it,  
for the price of a pint of beer, viz., three halfpence. This was a more  
comfortable as well as a cheaper breakfast and kept their heads clearer.  
Those who continued sotting with their beer all day were often, by not  
paying, out of credit at the ale-house, and used to make interest with  
me to get beer; their light, as they phrased it, being out. I watched  
the pay table on Saturday night and collected what I stood engaged for  
them, having to pay sometimes near thirty shillings a week on their  
accounts." Even as a young man Franklin could strike a bargain and  
look out for his own interests.

Benjamin had scarcely become acclimated to the city when he  
chanced to read an article by Wollaston entitled "Religion of Nature".  
Not agreeing with it, or rather thinking he did not agree, he composed  
"A Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity, Pleasure and Pain." In this  
he expressed sentiments that appeared to many people abominable.

On July 2, 1727, Benjamin started back for Philadelphia, hav-  
ing received a promise of a position in Denham's shop. Denham was a  
Quaker Franklin had met and become friendly with on the  
Philadelphia  
again voyage to London. Ben returned with many ideas--as

\*\* Fay puts it, "Ben returned with a youthfulness of body and mind.....

\*\* The Apostle of Modern Times; Bernard Fay, page 108

\* Franklin's Autobiography; MacMillan Pocket Edition, page 48.





Boston had given him his education and the start of his radicalism,-- Philadelphia had encouraged the latter, and London had brought it to the pitch and final test."

Franklin did not remain long in his new position because in February of 1727 both Denham and Franklin were taken ill. Denham died, leaving Ben a small legacy; Benjamin nearly died. Upon his recovery Benjamin went to work for Keimer again. He had trouble with him, leaving once but returning and remaining until 1728, when he formed a partnership with Hugh Meredith, a man of considerable wealth. These two young men started the third printing press in Philadelphia, and Franklin then started in earnest to make a place for himself in Philadelphian life. While in London he had "jilted" Deborah; she, in turn, completed the break by marrying a rounder, named Rogers. Rogers had gone to the West Indies soon after the marriage, and rumor had it that he had died there. Franklin turned to Deborah once more. She was the only woman he had ever loved. In 1730 Deborah and Franklin were married. Bernard \* Fay says, "It was good of Franklin to take her for his wife in September 1730, for he thus saved Deborah from a miserable and solitary destiny. It was good of her to accept him as a husband, for she had a breach of trust to pardon him, and an unknown little boy to accept as a son, whom Ben offered at the same time.....The secret of his birth was so well guarded that Deborah was often taken for his mother. She neither affirmed nor denied this, and by her treatment of the child, it was impossible to tell whether she was an exacting mother or a none too kind stepmother."

To increase his standing in the community Franklin, in 1727,

\* The Apostle of Modern Times; Bernard Fay, page 136.



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formed "The Junto", a club for mutual improvement and benefit. The  
\* following rules were given to the club. "That every member in his  
turn should produce one or more queries on any point of morals, poli-  
tics, or natural philosophy, to be discussed by the company; and once  
in three months should produce and read an essay of his own writing on  
whatever subject he pleased. Our debates were to be under the direc-  
tion of a president and to be conducted in the sincere spirit of in-  
quiry after truth, without fondness for dispute or desire for victory:  
and to prevent warmth, all expressions of positiveness in opinions or  
direct contradictions were after some time made contraband and prohibi-  
ted under small pecuniary penalties." In this club Franklin increased  
his general store of knowledge. Philosophy, science, and politics were  
talked over, Franklin, all the while keeping distinctly above any poli-  
tical controversies. In connection with this club Franklin started the  
first circulating library in America. The project began by a mere in-  
terchange of books among members, but because of "rights of ownership"  
some book lovers disliked lending their personal copies. The result  
was the formation of the library. The venture immediately became popu-  
lar, for it was considered fashionable to read, and Franklin was looked  
upon with favor by the people of the colony.

Previous to 1727 Benjamin Franklin had adhered to no fixed  
religious doctrines. At one time he had been a deist; at another he  
had styled himself a "staunch doubter". He had regarded man as little  
more than animal; he had regarded God as a very vague ideal. In 1727  
Franklin had nearly died. Had he done so he doubted his own self-re-  
liance in the next world. Therefore, Benjamin Franklin decided to

\* Life and Writing of Benjamin Franklin; Smythe, Vol. I, page 299





have a God. This God of his was one of many gods. The religion he professed was polytheistic. In connection with this sudden conversion Ben started a religious sect called "The Society of the Free and Easy". In this there were no doctrines, no ideals that could not be reached by all religions.

Benjamin then changed his moral system. He set up a list of thirteen virtues towards which he strove daily. Each day Ben would check those he felt that he had lived up to. In this way Franklin learned to resist successfully any temptations that natural inclination, company, or circumstances might place before him.

In 1730 Benjamin Franklin was able to buy Meredith's share of the business out. Meredith had little business sense and was very glad to relinquish his rights.

The same year saw Philadelphia in a serious economic condition. Money was scarce, taxes were high, and the public was, in general, depressed over the state of affairs. Franklin thought long and hard about the matter and finally offered a solution; a new issue of paper currency. He outlined his plan in the "Gazette" (this was Franklin's newspaper) and supported it with exceptionally logical arguments. His plan was adopted. Conditions were relieved. Benjamin Franklin was appointed by the Assembly to print the bills. He was later appointed public printer of Philadelphia.

Franklin wanted to be a Mason. The order of Masonry had made its way among the important men, among the intellectual and intelligent classes. Franklin realized that Masonry had been and was a very powerful influence in Great Britain. He had seen and recognized this fact while in London, and, furthermore, he was fully aware of the power presented by such a cosmopolitan association. He knew that Masonic





connections would help him, not only as a printer and a journalist, but as a rising leader in American political life. So he decided that the time was ripe for his entrance into that mysterious order. Masonry from the beginning had been shrouded in mystery, and, as all secret orders, it had felt the opposition of those not invited to join, as well as the suspicion of certain governments. It would be a very simple task for a newspaper to stir up public sentiments against it, and once suspicion was aroused, masonry might easily fear its end, either by the furious public or by a disapproving government. Franklin by a clever little article appearing in the issue of the "Pennsylvania Gazette" for December 8, 1730, published, what claimed to be, a complete account of the Masonic mysteries. It was written with all the shrewdness that Franklin had at his command. The Masons did not argue; they were intelligent. They invited Benjamin Franklin, printer, to become one of their exalted number.

B. "Poor Richard Almanack" Days 1732-1757.

Franklin had been reading "Poor Robin", an English publication. This was a licentious magazine, full of gross statements and indecent illustrations. From this publication, however, Franklin got the idea for his almanac. Accordingly, in 1732, Franklin published the first issue of "Poor Richard's Almanack". This publication became the

The citizen  
of Philadel-  
phia.

pivot of his financial success. Hardly a household in colonial America was without a copy of the Almanac, and

the maxims of Poor Richard became bywords for all the people. What Franklin did not dare openly say, Poor Richard courageously commented upon. Thus the ideas of Franklin were propagated





throughout the colonies and by steady progress Franklin became an authoritative voice in Colonial America. He filled his almanac from the very beginning, with all sorts of writings. Humorous sketches, witty sarcastic articles, and serious appeals, all appeared and were written in an individualistic style. Few of his productions were original in source. He lavishly borrowed from English sources, but he so reclothed those borrowed ideas that they are original because of their "Franklinish" tone. In an early issue of the almanac appeared a good example of this. Jonathan Swift, Steele, and some others of "Will's Coffee House" in England forecasted, as a joke, the life and death of one Doctor Partridge. The fame of the foolery went throughout England and Europe. Some years later Benjamin Franklin played a similar joke on one Mr. Titan Leeds.

As a means of further increasing his income Franklin published the first foreign newspaper in America, "The Philadelphia Zeitung". In the year 1733, he established<sup>a</sup> branch printing office in Charleston, South Carolina.

Franklin was a loyal Mason. In his newspaper he inserted discreet but flattering notes on the activities of the Masonic orders  
\* both here and abroad. Bernard Fay says, "But above all he was faithful to the spirit of Masonry as it was then described, 'It tends to promote Friendship, Society, Mutual Assistance, and Good Fellowship' ". Through this lodge affiliation Franklin became acquainted with the upper classes of society. He presented his ideas before the lodge members and found in such company an excellent place to learn to speak. He made these men his friends. Franklin was one who made friends

\* Apostle of Modern Times; Bernard Fay, page 147.





easily and held them easily. His ready wit, his store of anecdotes and stories, his ready sympathy, and the utter aversion he had to defamation of character endeared him to all. In 1734 Franklin was elected Grand Master of the Masons in Philadelphia.

In 1736 Franklin went through his greatest sorrow. Francis Folger Franklin, his young son, died from the small pox. Franklin heard of a rumor which had spread that Francis had died from an inoculation taken to guard against the disease. He did all in his power to suppress and disapprove this report. We know that the blow of this death was a severe one to Franklin; still he showed his regard for the rest of humanity by publishing the following article, making, as it \*were, an example of his own son's death. "Understanding 'tis a current report, that my son Francis, who lately died of the Samll Pox had it by inoculation; and being desired to satisfy the Publick in that Particular; inasmuch as some people are, by that Report (joined with others of the like and perhaps equally groundless) deter'd from having that Operation performed on their Children, I do hereby sincerely declare that he was not inoculated, but received the Distemper in the common way of Infection; and I suppose the Report could only arise from its being my known Opinion, that Inoculation was a safe and Beneficial Practice; and from my having said among my Acquaintance that I intended to have my child inoculated as soon as he should have recovered sufficient strength from a Flux with which he had been long afflicted." This small item gives a glimpse of a certain love for human life that Franklin had.

The same year found Franklin busy in community affairs. He

\* Apostle of Modern Times; Bernard Fay, page 173.





was chosen Secretary of the Pennsylvania Assembly. This was an advantageous position, for he was always at the source of news. He could watch over all situations without having to express his opinions in discussions or without being responsible for anything that went on.

He was interested in establishing a fire department for the city of Philadelphia. The "Gazette" he used as an agent for propagating the plan. Franklin brought the project to a successful conclusion, and, from that time on never failed to point out the many times the fire company served the colony.

Franklin had been angling for the position of postmaster of Philadelphia for some years. He felt that in such a position he could more easily reach the people of the colony and also increase his income. In 1741 he obtained this long-desired office and held it for sixteen years. Franklin further increased his income by establishing a printing office in New York City, in partnership with James Parker, an ambitious young man.

Not all of Benjamin Franklin's time was taken up in financial ventures. He had an inventive mind; he had a practical mind. He often combined the two. In 1742 he brought forth the Franklin Open Stove. It was a decided improvement upon the heating methods of the day in that it eliminated excess smoke and fuel dust. He followed this invention with a pamphlet in 1744 which highly recommended the newly invented fireplaces.

It was at this time also that the subject of electricity began to intrigue him. Franklin began to experiment in electricity whenever he had a few leisure moments. In 1747 he expounded his theory of





electricity and gained quite a degree of fame by its sound premises and conclusions.

It is interesting to note that Franklin even went into the field of literary editorship. He published the first American reprint of the English sensation "Pamela".

Franklin's home life was made exceptionally happy in 1746 because of the birth of Sarah Franklin. Sarah, from her birth, proved to be far more of a blessing and joy to Franklin than the illegitimate William ever did.

The year 1747 saw Philadelphia in danger of an attack from the French. Great Britain was at war with France and Spain and the colonies, of course, were endangered. The Quaker Assembly was, because of the religious creed of its members, opposed to war and refused to vote money for defense measures. Franklin knew that the situation was precarious and took steps to intervene. He gave over several editions of the "Gazette" to the general subject of protection and pointed out that it was not against God's commands to spend money for ammunition and materials that were to insure the safety and lives of thousands of people. His masterly words convinced the Quakers of not only the necessity of protection, but also the honor in protecting women and children.

The very next year, 1748, proved to be the turning point in Franklin's career. He retired from active business life in that he sold his printing press to David Hall, hitherto his partner. Franklin was shrewd enough to make terms advantageous for himself. He maintained through these terms a hold on the press for a number of years. Hall





paid Franklin for the full ownership of the press in yearly installments. This arrangement was quite satisfactory to Benjamin. It assured him of a yearly income and of a press, in which, if need be, he could express his ideas and carry on his campaigns.

The handling of the Assembly during the French danger greatly impressed the people and Franklin was rewarded for his care and foresight by being chosen as a member of the Council of Philadelphia.

His experiments in electricity and lightning, meanwhile, were progressing. He propounded his theory of the electrical condition in the Leyden jar. In 1749 he wrote "Observations and Suppositions on

First breath  
of European  
recognition

Thunder Gusts", and in the following year he published "Opinions and Conjectures concerning the Properties and Effects of the Electrical Matter, and the Means of Preserving Buildings, Ships, etc., from Lightning, arising from Experiments and Observations made at Philadelphia in 1748". This latter was the greatest of all his electrical writings, for, here he described the uses of his invention, the lightning rod. Two friends of Franklin's, Collinson and Mitchell, sent these papers to the Royal Society in London where, after some discussion, his ideas were accepted.

Franklin's mind was filled with many subjects; many interests claimed his attention. The matter of education received a fair portion of his time. He published a pamphlet "Proposals relating to the Education of the Youth in Pennsylvania". This article along with much follow up propaganda led to the establishment of the University of Pennsylvania.

The election of Franklin to the Pennsylvania Assembly started





him upon fourteen years of legislature service to his city. He, with the speaker of the house, was appointed to make a treaty with the Indians. There had been considerable border trouble and some unnecessary massacres which made conciliation advisable and necessary.

Franklin had backed so many public enterprises successfully that, between the years 1750-1752, he was asked to help found a hospital, to establish a fire insurance company, to help the Reverend Tennetta, a worthy minister of Philadelphia, erect a new church, and to send a boat to look for the Northwest Passage. It was Franklin's able assistance which made every one of these projects succeed. To gain the money for the hospital he used a method much used today by educational foundations but which was new to the Americans. He obtained a statement from the Assembly to the effect that it would pay two thousand pounds toward the project on the condition that an equal amount be raised by the people. The plan succeeded. For the insurance company he easily raised the money and likewise for the vessel "Argo", which made two voyages in vain. Bernard Fay tells us that Franklin

\* had become such a technician in the art of extracting money from other people's pockets, that nothing was done in the city without him. In spite of his habit of not going to church, he was appointed church-warden and asked to organize a lottery which would procure the funds necessary to purchase bells and erect a tower for the Church of Christ. And finally, Gilbert Tennent asked him for help. Franklin refused, saying that he could ask no more from his fellow citizens, but he gave his receipt to Tennent. "In the first place I advise you to apply to all those whom you know will give something; next to those whom you

\* Apostle of Modern Times; Bernard Fay, page 140





are uncertain whether they will give anything or not, and show them the list of those who have given; and, lastly, do not neglect those who you are sure will give nothing, for in some of them you may be mistaken."

In the same year he made his celebrated kite experiments and discharged electricity from the clouds. He followed this up by a pamphlet on the uses of the lightning rod. The king of France, Louis XV, directed his thanks to Franklin for his useful discoveries about electricity, and the Royal Society of London presented him with the "Copley Medal". His own country honored him, too. Yale conferred the Master of Arts degree upon him and Harvard soon followed Yale's example.

For a few years previous to this time the colonists had been having trouble with the Indians. In 1754 a Congress was called at Albany, New York, to find some satisfactory agreement. Franklin conceived the idea of what we now call the Albany Plan of Union; namely, a federation of colonies for mutual growth and protection. He attempted to make his idea popular by clever journalism and cartoons. The plan was declared efficient by those at the Congress but much to the disappointment of its founder the individual states refused to accept it. Franklin had counted upon the fear and hatred of the French to establish the practical cooperation and to overcome provincial suspicions. The Lord of Trades in London failed to see the great advantages there would be in such a federation.

It came to the attention of Franklin that the Postmaster General of America, Benger, was seriously ill, and not likely to re-





cover. This position was one that would just suit Franklin. It was lucrative, apt to become more so, respectable, and required a great deal of travel in order to keep up friendly connections among the colonies; it was very useful for a journalist, as well as for a politician and a scholar. Franklin asked his Masonic friend, William Allen, and his English friend, Collinson, to help him. Both men held positions of high influence in their respective countries. The help secured: the negotiations succeeded. In 1754, when Benger died, Franklin was named Postmaster-General in America conjointly with Colonel Hunter of Virginia. Bernard Fay says, "As postmaster-general Franklin held the fates of all newspapers in his hands; could regard the American merchants from a superior plane, and was on equal footing with English officials. Moreover, he had a mine of jobs at his disposal,..... However, he didn't think entirely of himself and his family. He was a remarkable postmaster-general, and improved the service, which had been hitherto rather mediocre, until it became a highly perfected organization.

General Braddock landed in America in the early part of 1755 to pursue the French and Indian wars. Franklin went into conference with him and agreed to raise a number of horses and teams for transportation, etc. He printed posters which offered a large sum to the farmers who would lend their wagons, harnesses, horses, and mules, to the troops of His Majesty. These words, accompanied with the threat that in case of refusal the wagons would be procured by seizure, made the colonists respond. When, however, Braddock met defeat losing not only soldiers but the colonists' wagons, the effect of the news was disas-

\* The Apostle of Modern Times; Bernard Fay, page 242





terous. The farmers all came to Franklin for reimbursement for the loss of the wagons. This threatened to ruin Benjamin Franklin financially and politically. General Shirley, the successor of Braddock, saved Franklin by ordering that the wagons be paid for out of the army funds.

Some months later it was necessary to have a defense for the western frontier. A measure to create a militia was introduced and Franklin was placed in command of it. He led a troop westward and, after the completion of a fort, he returned to Philadelphia.

Franklin was tired of such hurry and domestic affairs so he decided to take a trip to Virginia. It was both pleasing and useful. The University of William and Mary conferred the degree of Master of Arts upon him and he was named honorary citizen of the city of Norfolk. New honors awaited him on his return to Philadelphia. He was presented with a diploma of Member of the Royal Society in London.

#### C. European Periods 1757-1785

In 1757 the colonial affairs of Pennsylvania were at a crisis. The Penns, the proprietary owners of the colony, would not agree to taxation by the Assembly on their estates. Franklin who, hitherto, had kept himself apart from such arguments, realized that he had to take a stand in this issue. He came out with all the enthusiasm of his nature on the side of the Quakers and the people, as against the Penns and Gentlemen. The whole summer of 1757 saw Franklin and the Governor trying to find a solution. Little could be done but the Assembly voted to send Franklin to England to discover some basis of agreement with the Penns. Franklin made affectionate farewells to Debby, Sally, and





to all of his good friends. He sailed in the summer taking with him his son, William Franklin.

Franklin was a Whig, and as such he held to the hegemony of British civilization, with its ideal of liberty and Protestantism. He turned towards England with the early hope of colonial English Period \* unification uppermost. He wanted "to establish an Anglo-Saxon confederation with its capital, king, and Federal Parliament in London, the latter conserving the rights of Magna Charta and sending representatives to the Imperial Parliament."

Franklin and William arrived at London on July 26. His reception was far different from that given him upon his first entry into that city. He was quite well-known now, his scientific experiments had made the great scientists respect him, and, as a printer, he had the whole printers' association behind him. Friends crowded about him, even his old friend, Ralph. He took lodgings with Mrs. Mary Stevenson, the charming widow in whose home he had stayed the first time he visited London.

On the subject of taxation of the Penn's holdings no suitable conclusion was reached. He had in addition, to deal with some Indian problems, in the interests of which he published a pamphlet written by one Charles Thompson "An Inquiry into the Causes of the Alienation of the Shawnese and Delaware Indians". This pamphlet was very bitter against the Penns. In this skirmish the agent for Pennsylvania came out victorious. By 1759, however, it seemed to Franklin that as far as taxation and representation were concerned he was fighting a losing fight. The Ministry as well as the Penns considered the Americans as

\* The Apostle of Modern Times; Bernard Fay, page 263





their subjects, and Franklin's dream of an Anglo-American empire began to fade from his mind.

He succeeded, nevertheless, very well in society, both English and Scotch. Meanwhile the war with France was nearing a speedy and victorious conclusion. Peace became a delightful topic for conversation and the West Indies and Canada were considered as the possible spoils of the war. The planters wanted the West Indies whereas Franklin and other far-seeing men urged the accession of Canada. In 1760, Franklin published the Canada pamphlet, which set forth in a tactful, appropriate way the pleas for annexation.

He continued arguing for some sort of agreement concerning the taxation law and finally, on September 2, 1760, Benjamin Franklin came to complete victory. The estates of the Penns, per agreement of the Privy Council, were no longer immune from taxation.

In this period it is interesting to note that Deborah missed Franklin a great deal. He sent her many presents, good advice, and begged her not to get mixed up in domestic politics.

On September 25, 1760, George II died and George III mounted on the throne. Soon afterwards Franklin returned to Philadelphia. His son William remained in London to continue a love affair. Never more was there any close companionship between father and son. The return voyage would have bored Franklin had not his intellectual curiosity kept him alive. He drew scientific and philosophical conclusions from his observations on how the water underneath the surface of oil was in great commotion though the oil remained tranquil.

Franklin's entrance into Philadelphia was a triumph. He was





met by the faithful Debby, his charming Sally, and by a host of friends. Franklin immediately looked to his business concerns, then took his place in political life. He started to build up the Post Office of America in earnest. In 1763 he toured the colonies with the last purpose in mind. Admiring crowds greeted him everywhere.

The same year had seen a series of Indian wars raging on the western frontier. The revolt of Pontiac had been heartless, and, moreover, it had stirred up the Scotch-Presbyterian farmers who lived along the border. Suddenly these farmers attacked a small group of submissive and civilized Indians, killing twenty of them in their homes. The remaining Indians fled to Philadelphia for protection. Franklin was incensed and proved it in an eloquent pamphlet "A Narrative of the Late Massacres in Lancaster County". This demanded justice from the governor for the Indians. Those who had committed the outrage marched upon Philadelphia. The governor, in despair, turned to Franklin. Franklin with the members of the Junto, the Fire Department, and the Military Association met the crowd at the city gates. There was no bloodshed, Franklin made a speech which convinced the invaders of their folly.

In 1764 Franklin was elected speaker of the Assembly and as such signed a petition to the King pleading that Pennsylvania be converted into a Royal Province. The old question of taxation of the Penns came up in a new form. Neither Assembly nor the governor would conciliate.

Franklin was again sent to England. On November 4, 1764, Franklin embarked. He determined to return with a royal charter; he determined that in spite of the Penns, their governors, and the stupidity of





the people he would construct an Anglo-Saxon empire. He arrived in London on the eleventh of December and went immediately to the home of the good Mrs. Stevenson. She saw that he was tired and did her best to restore his physical and mental calm. She, apart from Deborah, understood Franklin better than anyone.

The Stamp Law was proposed in Parliament. It was passed without any discussion one fine evening when the House of Commons was empty. Franklin was surprised but thought this act might force the Americans and the English to examine the principles upon which their relations were based. This did not happen. In America a hue and cry was raised against England. Franklin was reviled by many because he had done nothing in opposing its passage. The English ministry, in turn, realized their error, but to convince the English people of this error would be difficult. Franklin by publishing many pamphlets helped a great deal in swaying public opinion. In January, 1766, Franklin was examined before the House of Commons relative to the repeal of the Stamp Act. His answers were brief, concise, and made many Englishmen do some hard thinking about the American situation. The act was re-

\* pealed and Bernard Fay tells us that "Franklin had saved his country, the future British Empire, and he had saved himself."

The exertions had greatly tired Franklin and in order to get his mind away from English and American affairs he made an extended tour throughout Germany and Holland. When he returned to England he found a great deal of mail and political duties awaiting him. He had news of the death of his brother Peter. Debby was cross because of Franklin's continued absence, and William Franklin had been displaying royalist tendencies. (He had been appointed Governor of New York).

\* The Apostle of Modern Times; Bernard Fay, page 322





Franklin had three duties to perform in England. He was to make the King agree to take over the government of Pennsylvania, to persuade Parliament to permit Americans to issue paper currency, and to influence Parliament to renounce the taxation of Pennsylvania. He could, however, do little in these matters and devoted his time to scientific studies. Interested in research, he tried to improve his lightning rod. He travelled extensively throughout Europe and was presented to the King of France. The French people admired and respected him. Many of his works were translated and published.

In 1767 Franklin's daughter Sally was married to Richard Bache, a merchant of Philadelphia. Bache's business was not on a firm footing so in 1771 Bache sailed for England. He wanted to receive some sort of official post from Franklin. Franklin convinced him that he had better stick to his business.

Franklin had been appointed agent for the colony of Georgia in 1768 which position he held as long as he remained in Europe. Two years later Massachusetts designated him to be her agent. He was elected President of the American Philosophical Society in 1769. This position he retained until his death. The year 1771 was pleasant. Franklin toured Scotland and Ireland, started to write his autobiography, and presented to Harvard some valuable books.

Franklin came into the possession of a group of letters written by Thomas Hutchinson, the distinguished governor of Massachusetts. These letters urged that Great Britain use force in quelling the Massachusetts' rebels. In December, 1772, Franklin mailed the letters to the Committee of Correspondence in Boston, and asked them





to use the letters to enlighten public opinion but not to publish them. He knew very well that eventually they would be published, nor did he wish otherwise. He did not want their source revealed. They were published and a serious quarrel arose in London as to the person responsible for them. Franklin saw that reputations were being ruined. He, therefore, acknowledged his guilt. On the morning of January 29, 1774, Franklin was examined before the Privy Council. He was humiliated. He lost all of his illusions about England, her aristocracy, and the hopes of an Anglo-Saxon Empire. Two days after the examination he was discharged from his position as Postmaster-General of the colonies. Franklin was ruined in England but by this play the British Empire gave a great leader to America, a man who was admired throughout the world, and, furthermore they made the uncertain union between Pennsylvania and Massachusetts a certainty.

This same year marked the Boston Tea Party. Franklin offered to pay for the damage if the government would repeal the acts made against Boston. He presented to Lord Dartmouth the petition to the King that had been adopted by the Continental Congress. The year 1772 brought its extreme personal sorrows. Faithful Debby passed away and his son, William, definitely allied himself with the royalists.

\* Franklin became acquainted with "the adventurer, who was a Quaker, a Mason, and employee, a vagabond", Thomas Paine. Paine had self-educated himself and was an extreme believer in liberty. He wanted to settle in America so Franklin offered to give him the money for passage to America and also some letters of introduction to certain influential men in Philadelphia. Paine settled in that city and became an enthusiast for the American cause.

\* The Apostle of Modern Times; Bernard Fay, page 375





The fifth of May, 1775 was the day that Benjamin Franklin arrived back in Philadelphia. He was given a tremendous ovation. He had no chance for rest because the American situation was worse than he had anticipated. He realized for the first time that there could be no "going back" to the Mother Country. Franklin threw his life and fortunes into the cause of the thirteen colonies. The day after he landed he was unanimously elected by the Pennsylvania Assembly to be one of its representatives to Congress. He served on not less than ten important committees of the Congress and on July 26, 1775 the Continental Congress elected him Postmaster-General of the American posts.

Franklin with F. Lynch and B. Harris was chosen to inspect the army of the Continental Congress. He had a delightful trip to Boston and his conversations with Washington greatly inspired him. He bound himself to the American cause body and soul. He attempted to make diplomatic connections with foreign countries, although he knew that none would respond until some definite victory had been won by the Americans.

Thomas Paine, whom Franklin had sent to America, published in 1776, his pamphlet "Common Sense". This pamphlet stirred the people more than any other publication of the time. The Declaration of Independence, written by Jefferson and corrected by Franklin, soon followed, in large measure inspired by "Common Sense". Congress appointed Franklin to confer with Lord Howe on the question of reconciliation. The conference was not a success. On September 26, 1776 Congress unanimously elected Franklin, Deane, and Lee as joint commission-





ers to represent America in France. Congress knew that they could not hope to pursue successfully the war unless they had financial backing from a strong European power. Franklin's son-in-law, Richard Bache, filled the position of Postmaster-General in Franklin's absence.

The Commissioners arrived in France, December 4, 1776. From the beginning the whole task fell upon the shoulders of Franklin as

the other two men had not enough tact and impartiality  
French Period to appeal to the French people. Franklin was clever.

He adopted the manners and customs of the French, dressed simply, and played up to the idea that the peasants associated with him,--the idea of liberty. He arrived in France with a great show of innocence and  
\* simplicity. Gaxoite tells us, "A ce moment Benjamin Franklin arrivait à Paris en qualite d'emabbadeur. 'Tout en lui' dit un publiciste, annoncait la simplicité et l'innocence des anciennes mœurs.....Il avait depouille la chevelaure empruntée. Ce qui signifiait qu'il ne portait pas perruque. On ne l'en accueillait qu'avec plus d'admiration. Mais il avait moins d'innocence qu'il ne semblait." He made excellent uses of his Masonic affiliations and his connections with printing houses assured him that he had means of spreading his theories.

In 1778 he obtained a gift of two million livres from France, and shortly after this the English offered Franklin a peerage and a pension for life, if he would betray the American cause. His refusal was one of the most notable productions of his pen. The same year Congress appointed him Sole Plenipotentiary to the Court of France, and as such he signed the Treaty of Commerce and Amity with France.

Franklin, during his residence in France, had time for play

\* La Revolution Francais; Gaxoite





and for scientific pursuits. He had established himself at Passy in a beautiful house with a garden enjoying a charming neighborhood, and here he surrounded himself with the society of Madame Helvetius, the Abbe Morelly, Cabanis, Madame Brillon, and other people of prominence. His relation to these various French women is extremely interesting to read about. There was none of the wild indiscretion that marked his youthful days, instead he had a deep appreciation for their companionship. He often spent days at Auteuil, talking nonsense with Madame Helvetius, and, after one such pleasant day, he suggested that they marry. The following day Franklin sent Madame a letter containing the contents of a dream he said that he had experienced that night. He imagined that he was wafted into the Elysian Fields and suddenly met Helvetius, himself. Helvetius was astonished to learn that his wife on earth was faithful to his memory. He had remarried. While \* they talked the new Madame Helvetius entered, bringing coffee. "Instantly", wrote the lively old man, "I recognized her as Madame Franklin, my former American wife. I claimed her; but she said coldly, 'I was your good wife for forty-nine years and four months, almost half a century; be satisfied with that. I have formed here a new connection that will last through eternity'. Displeased with this refusal of my Eurydice, I at once resolved to quit those thankless shades and return to this good world to see the sun and you. Here I am; let us avenge ourselves."

All this is gay, a pretty, piquant, social jest, but the lack of sentiment reveals itself. Franklin wrote one little story after another for her amusement. Madame Helvetius had a strongly

\* The Apostle of Modern Times: Bernard Fay, page 462





marked character, a precise brain, and a robust wit. In fact the clever woman reminded him a bit of his energetic "Debby". It is possible that Franklin was tired of being without a home, and proposed this semi-serious marriage with a half hope that she would accept him and make for him a home.

Madame Brilon de Jouy was young. When Franklin went to live at Passy, he seemed very wise and good to Madame Brillon. Fay quotes \*her, "I began by worshipping you with the respect everyone owes to a great man--then I was anxious to see you, and to flatter my self-respect by receiving you in my home. After your visit I could remember only your sensitive friendliness, your simplicity and goodness. I said to myself, this man is so good he will love me, and I have since begun to love you deeply, hoping you would return my affection." Franklin called her "my daughter" and she answered "Papa". He spent long evenings with her twice a week or so. They prolonged their conversations far into the night, and she never tired of his stories. It was on a walk with her that Franklin noticed some shimmering little insects with their wings glittering in the last rays of the sun. They reminded him of life's brevity, and, as a result, he wrote his well-known delightful little monologue, "The Ephemeris." In spite of these French acquaintances Franklin was not deceived as to his real heart. He had always been a home loving man, and had never been able to do without "Debby" in America or Mrs. Stevenson in England.

Throughout the years 1779, 1780 and 1781 Franklin received many loans from France and had interested Sweden and Prussia in the American cause. He signed treaties of Commerce and Amity with both

\* The Apostle of Modern Times: Bernard Fay, page 463





of these powers. In 1781 Franklin requested that the Continental Congress accept his resignation as Minister to France. He was growing very old. He was tired and ill. Congress refused, appointing him as a Commissioner of Pleas to Great Britain. His many years of political service and business activity had taught Franklin nearly all there was to know about diplomacy and shrewd bargains. He held to definite points of interest for America and would give in in no particular to Great Britain's ministers.

The King of France, Louis XIV, held Franklin in great esteem. Mesmer had recently propounded his theories. The King asked Franklin to serve on a committee to find out whether there were any truth in Mesmer's contentions. Franklin became interested in the subject and even submitted himself to experiments, at the close of which he wrote a scathing article denouncing Mesmerism.

In 1783 Franklin negotiated an armistice with Great Britain. He would sign no definite peace treaty as Great Britain did not seem inclined to recognize all of the colonial claims. He, later in the same year, signed the treaty of peace with England that completely recognized the independence of the "United States of America".

France was interested in balloon ascensions and Franklin prophesied that sometime balloons would be used as a means of transportation. He wrote an account of a balloon ascension and sent it to friends in America and in England. He was never interested in a scientific experiment for its own sake, but only as it could be turned into some practical end for human advancement.

Franklin had become exceptionally popular throughout Europe.





His works were translated into French, Italian, German and Spanish. He received honors from all nations. He was elected one of twenty-four foreign members of the Academy of Science, Letters and Arts at Badua. The Royal Academy of History at Madrid elected him a member, and the Manchester English Society of Literature and Philosophy made him an honorary member. There were numerous other elections of this type offered that proved how very well known and respected he was.

#### D. Franklin's Last Years--1785-1790

The year 1785 found Congress finally accepting Franklin's petition to be permitted to return to America. Thomas Jefferson was appointed in his place. When Franklin left Passy, he left behind him many devoted friends. All were sorrowful. Franklin, they knew, was leaving never to return again. The Queen of France sent her litter for Franklin's use. She knew that he suffered a great deal from the gout. Louis XV presented a miniature of himself surrounded by twenty-eight diamonds to Franklin. Many of his old English friends came to see him embark for America. He was sorrowful, too, yet there was a tremendous lifting of heart. He was going home.

Although Franklin was seventy-nine years old, he was not permitted to rest. Immediately the city of Philadelphia elected him a Councillor, and the Assembly sent him as a representative to the Constitutional Convention. The Articles of Confederation did not entirely meet Franklin's approval. He assented to them, however, realizing that if he rejected them many people in America would do likewise. He, himself, said, "I confess that I do not entirely approve of this Constitution at present. Sir, I agree to this constitution, with

\* The Apostle of Modern Times: Bernard Fay, page 505





all its faults, if they are such; because I think a general Government necessary for us and there is no form of Government but what may be a blessing to the people, if well administered; and I believe, further, that this is likely to be well administered for a course of years and can only end in despotism, as other forms have done before it, when the people shall become corrupted as to need despotic Government, being incapable of any other."

He was twice elected as Governor of Pennsylvania. In spite of such political activity Franklin longed for rest. He wanted to devote the remaining few years of his lifetime to his scientific, philosophic, and humanitarian impulses. He declined compensation from the government for his public services and devoted the same to public uses, such as schools, colleges and similar benevolent institutions. The year 1786 found him especially active in college work.

Franklin around this time established two trusts; one at Boston, the other at Philadelphia. The purpose of these was to help artisans who were married and under twenty-five years of age, living in one of the two cities. The term of apprenticeship of the candidate must be completed, and the applicant must have obtained a certificate asserting moral character from two worth-while citizens. He placed the funds in the hands of a Board of Trustees and it is rather too bad that, because of the passing of the apprenticeship system, this idea of the practical Benjamin Franklin, never proved itself to be practical.

In 1778 Franklin helped to organize the first society formed for the abolishment of negro slavery. He was its first president and





wrote the first remonstrance against slavery that was ever addressed to the American Congress. This was the last article Franklin wrote.

In 1789 Franklin was elected to the Imperial Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburg. Shortly after this election Franklin became ill. He knew that he was approaching death. He had no fears because he considered that he had always served mankind well,--therefore he had served God well. He spent his time in intellectual pursuits. He did not lose his keenness of mind, even at his death hour. When Franklin was a very old man Doctor Manasseh Cutler wrote of him, "I was highly delighted with the extensive knowledge he appeared to have of every subject, the brightness of his memory, and clearness and vivacity of all his mental faculties, notwithstanding his age. His manners are perfectly easy, and everything about him seems to diffuse an unrestrained freedom and happiness. He has an incessant vein of humor, accompanied with an uncommon vivacity, which seems as natural and involuntary as his breathing." He retained his calmness of spirit, his sense of humor, and his many friends. He died in Philadelphia April 17, 1790. He was buried in Christ Church Burying Ground, in the Southeast corner of Fifth and Arch Streets, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It is fitting that he is buried there. Although Franklin was a cosmopolitan, although he had been born in Boston, and travelled over most of the civilized world, his heart and foremost interests were always in the City of Philadelphia, the proprietary province of Pennsylvania.

\* Benjamin Franklin Self-Revealed; Bruce, Vol. II, page 7.





## II. Works

The "Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin" is the work through which the majority of people know Franklin. It is a complete record of Franklin's life up to the year 1757, when, suddenly, it ends. In this biography we get the thoughts and actions of the boy and the man. His religious, moral, scientific, and political development are hinted at and the record of his religious growth is traced in full.

"Poor Richard's Almanack" was the greatest and most interesting of Franklin's publications. In this appeared articles on all sorts of subjects ranging from the burlesque to the spiritual, from the ridiculous to the sublime, from the matter of forecasts to the facts of reality. It is written with all of Franklin's cleverness, subtleness, and imaginative power.

There are a great many works by Franklin that we call his satires and bagatelles. Humor was native and spontaneous with Franklin. His juvenile contributions to the New England Courant abound with rollicking fun. He found nonsense refreshing and seemed to feel that pleasantries have a secret charm that allays the heats and troubles of our spirits.

The "Dogood Papers" are full of humor and satire. They are never dull and they reveal with completeness the mind of the precocious, restless, inquisitive boy. "The Pennsylvania Gazette", published from 1729-1757, was in its earlier years practically all written by him. Its paragraphs are full of extravagance, recklessness, and occasional





irreverence. He would often write a fictitious letter to his newspaper and follow it up with imaginary replies.

Franklin was very fond of practical joking and this led him to compose certain canards which deceived many careful readers. Such were the "Speech of Polly Baker", "An Edict of the King of Prussia", "Supplement to the Boston Chronicle", "Parables Against Persecution", "A Paraphrase of a Chapter of Job", "On the Means of Disposing the Enemy to Peace."

While Franklin was in France his pen was not entirely occupied in making addresses and memorials. He found time to compose for the amusement of his friends and his dinner parties were large and merry with his jests and essays. These light essays of the imaginative type he called his bagatelles. They were published by William Temple with the following headnote:

"The Letters, Essays, etc., contained in this section were  
\* written by Dr. Franklin for the amusement of his intimate friends in London and Paris, and were by himself actually collected in a portfolio, endorsed as above". The pieces were either in French or afterward translated by him into that language by way of exercise:

1. 'The Levee'
2. 'Proposed New Version of the Bible'
3. 'Apologue'
4. 'To Miss Georgiana Shipley, dated London September 26, 1772, with an epitaph on her American squirrel.'
5. 'The Art of Procuring Pleasant Dreams'
6. 'The Whistle'

\* The Life and Writing of Benjamin Franklin: Smythe, Vol. I, page 184





7. 'The Ephemera'
8. 'The Petition of the Left Hand'
9. 'The Handsome and Deformed Leg'
10. 'Morals of Chess'
11. 'Conte, a Tale'
12. 'Dialogue between Franklin and the Gout'
13. 'To Madame Helvetius'
14. 'Tres humble requite Presentee a Madame Helvetius par  
ses Chats'
15. 'A Monsieur L'Abbe de la Roche, a Auteuil
16. 'AMonsieur L'Abbe Morellet, Passy'

There are a considerable number of political and economic works that Franklin wrote. Both kinds of works were intended to subserve a definite political or economic purpose, and so might be called campaign documents. They do not always contain, then, the clear reasoning of many of his other writings. They are often inconsistent, for Franklin frequently contradicted himself, in that in one paper he would advocate a certain project because of the political necessity of it

Political and  
Economic  
Works

and, perhaps, later he would condemn that which he had advocated because the situation in hand seemed in need of some other remedy. It is apparent in all of his political works and in his economic works, that Franklin urged what he regarded as political expediency despite of any attempt at personal consistency. His ideals of thrift, caution, comfort, and husbandry, however, appeared in nearly all of these papers.

There are not many papers on economic subjects written by





Franklin. The following make up the list of his economic works:

1. "A Modest Enquiry into the Nature and Necessity of Paper Currency." 1729
2. "Observations concerning the Increase of Mankind and the Peopling of Countries." 1751
3. "The Interest of Great Britain Considered, with regard to her colonies, and the Acquisitions of Canada and Auadaloupe." 1760
4. "Remarks and Facts relative to the American Paper Money." 1765
5. "Positions to be examined concerning National Wealth." 1769
6. "Comparison of Great Britain and the United States in regard to the basis of Credit in the Two Countries." 1777
7. "On the Paper Money of the United States." 1761
8. "Reflections on the Augmentation of Wages, which will be occasioned in Europe by the American Revolution." 1783
9. "Internal State of America, being a true description of the Interest and Policy of that Vast Continent." 1784
10. "Information to those who would remove to America." 1784

Franklin wrote an immense number of political works. "A Plain Truth", "The Plan of Union", "Militia Act", "Dialogue of X.Y.Z.", "A Narrative of the Late Massacre in Lancaster County", "Cool Thoughts", belong to the period of warfare between the Pennsylvania Assembly and the Propreitary. The remainder of Franklin's political pamphlets dealt

\* with world affairs and revolutionary concerns.

Franklin's philosophic and scientific papers cover a singu-

\* I do not list the later political works as they are entirely too numerous.





larly wide range, and touch upon an astonishing variety of subjects.

In every line of thought the leaders of scientific ex-  
Scientific and  
Philosophi- periment in Europe were curious to know Franklin's  
cal works.

opinions. His philosophical and scientific writings  
were the products of rare intervals of repose. Occasionally he turned  
from the irksome toil of his public duties to divert and refresh him-  
self with scientific experiments or brief excursions into the con-  
jectural and debatable subjects of new philosophical research. These  
writings relate to subjects of electricity, seismology, geology, meter-  
ology, physics, chemistry, astronomy, mathematics, hydrography, horology,  
aeronautics, navigation, agriculture, ethnology, paleontology, medicine,  
hygiene and pedagogy.

One of his first essays on scientific theory appeared in the  
"Pennsylvania Gazette" in 1737. It related to the "causes of earth-  
quakes". The study of the earth fascinated Franklin and time and time  
again he wrote other articles on this subject.

Among Franklin's papers on meteorology will be found his dis-  
covery that our northeast storms originate in the southwest. His ex-  
planation is decidedly interesting for the directness and simplicity  
of his illustrations. The most interesting of the meteorological papers  
relates to waterspouts and whirlwinds, which Franklin believed to be  
similar to and to proceed from the same cause.

In physics and chemistry Franklin was in correspondence and  
personal contact with Priestly, Cavendish, and Lavoisier. Franklin, in  
a letter to Lavoisier, gave an early account of marsh-gas. He, as early  
as 1764, had experimentally ignited the surface of certain rivers in





New Jersey, after stirring up the mud at the bottom in shallow places. The members of the Royal Society would not believe that marsh gas could be lighted. Later Franklin proved his contention to them.

In 1747, Franklin had started to experiment in electricity, and after one year's experimentation with the newly contrived apparatus he had mastered most of the theory and practice of the applied electrical science possible in his day. To his friend, Collinson, Franklin wrote many letters concerning electrical phenomena. He wrote two great pamphlets concerning the subject. "Observations and Supposi-  
(1)  
tions on Thunder-gusts", and "Opinions and Conjectures concerning the Properties and Effects of the Electrical Matter, and the Means of Preserving Buildings, Ships, etc., from Lightning, arising from Experi-  
(2)  
ments and Observations made at Philadelphia in 1748." These articles are written in a straight-forward, direct manner. The illustrations are excellent.

(3)  
Franklin's able report exposing the theory of "Mesmerism" was drawn up with great ingenuity. He expressed a decided concern for medicine and wrote many observations on common diseases, such as colds, headaches, and so on. His essay "On the Causes and Cure of Smoky Chimneys" was written at sea in August, 1785. It is an exhaustive and thoroughly scientific discussion of nine direct causes of the effect in question, with the remedies in each case, together with the principles on which both the cause and the remedy depend.

There are so many of Franklin's scientific papers that we could not hope to discuss each or even to list them. It is for this reason that I do not list the works in these philosophical and scien-

1. See page 14
2. See page 16
3. See page 31





tific sections.

The correspondence of Franklin's still remains for discussion. His correspondence is in nine languages, and relates to every subject that found a place in eighteenth century politics and philosophy. Nothing was foreign to his interests. His official correspondence was a deluge of letters. He was entreated by struggling educational societies for aid and by people soliciting for all sorts of enterprises. Among the serious correspondence of an official and scientific nature are bundles of dainty little notes in feminine caligraphy. These represent an essential phase of Franklin's life and must be looked into if one is to get a true and intimate picture of the real and many-sided Franklin.

### III. Thought

#### A. Development of Franklin's Literary Thought.

Franklin wrote much, but usually with a practical and immediate purpose. He was the best American writer of his time, a master of plain and vigorous English, but he had no aspirations after literary distinction. "Sydney Smith, a contemporary of Franklin's, said to his daughter, 'I will disinherit you, if you do not admire everything written by Franklin.'" A bit exaggerated, yet it seems to me that there is sound wisdom in this jest. Certainly there are only a few authors in the history of world literature who have exhibited such variety of theme, fertility of thought, and excellence of style as Benjamin Franklin.

In his Autobiography, Franklin declared that his ability in

\* Life and Writings of Benjamin Franklin, Vol I, page 33: Smythe





prose writing had been a principal means of his advancement in life, and he related the means by which he became as he says, "A tolerable English writer". When a boy of thirteen or fourteen, passionately fond  
(1)  
of books, he came upon an odd volume of the "Spectator".

Development  
of Franklin's literary style "I thought the writing excellent, and wished if possible, to imitate it. With this view I took some of the papers,

\* and making short hints of the sentiments in each sentence, laid them by a few days, and then, without looking at the book, tried to complete the papers again, by expressing each hinted sentiment at length, and as fully as it had been expressed before, in any suitable words that should come to hand. Then I compared my Spectator with the original..... but I found I wanted a stock of words.....Therefore I took some of the tales and turned them into verse; and, after a time, when I had pretty well forgotten the prose, turned them back again. I also sometimes jumbled my collections of hints into confusion, and after some weeks endeavored to reduce them into the best order, before I began to form the full sentences and complete the paper. This was to teach me method in the arrangement of thoughts. By comparing my work afterwards with the original, I discovered many faults and amended them; but I sometimes had the pleasure of fancying that, in certain particulars of small import, I had been lucky enough to improve the method or the language."

Thirty years of journalism taught Franklin all that was to be known of the technique of that busy craft. A swift and sententious style was developed by the practical necessities of his magazine, his newspaper, and his almanac. He equipped himself with all the methods of satire, burlesque, and repartee. In dealing with any issue through-

\* Life and Writings of Benjamin Franklin: Smythe; Vol I, page 241  
(1) See page 2





out his whole lifetime Franklin never said that he knew a thing to be so, but that he thought it to be so. He adopted the socratic method.

\* In his "Autobiography" he wrote: "As the chief ends of conversation are to inform or to be informed, to please or to persuade, I wish

well-meaning, sensible men would not leave their power  
Use of the Socratic Method of doing good by a positive, assuming manner, that self-dom fails to disgust, tends to create opposition, and  
to defeat every one of those purposes for which speech was given to us, to wit, giving or receiving information or pleasure." This method he employed also in his writings. Franklin had his own standard for

\* \*writings. "To be good a writing ought to have a tendency to benefit

the reader, by improving his virtue or his knowledge.  
Standard for writing. But, not regarding the intention of the author, the method should be just; that is, it should be the most expressive that the language affords, provided that they are most generally understood. Nothing should be expressed in two words that can as well be expressed in one; that is, no synonyms should be used, or very rarely, but the whole should be as short as possible consistent with clearness; the words should be so placed as to be agreeable to the ear in reading; summarily it should be smooth, clear, and short, for the contrary qualities are displeasing." Smooth, clear and short. These elements were forced upon Franklin's thought after his many years of journalism.

Franklin was interested in the purity of the language, and his precision in the use of words, constantly appears in his correspondence. Noah Webster sent him his "Dissertations on the English Lan-

\* The Life and Writings of Benjamin Franklin; Smythe Vol. I, page

\*\* The Life and Writings of Benjamin Franklin; Smythe Vol. I., page 33





\*guage". Franklin replied; "I cannot but applaud your zeal for pre-  
serving the purity of our language, both in its expres-  
Purity of the lan- guage sions and pronunciations, and in correcting the popular  
errors several of our states are continually falling in-  
to with respect to both". Franklin went on to give a list of words that  
he felt people constantly misused.

Franklin's writings had three objects: to instruct in prin-  
ciples of science, to influence conduct, and to amuse. In all that re-  
lates to personal prosperity and the happiness of private life, his  
reasoning is convincing and his style dignified. In the Prefaces and  
Prognostications of "Poor Richard's Almanack" Franklin as a man of let-  
ters shows to the best advantage here where practical wisdom in the  
conduct of life is the theme. Throughout his lifetime Franklin con-  
tinues writing in this way. "Father Abraham's Speech to the American  
People at an Auction" is the best example of his style, and the best  
sermon ever preached upon industry and frugality. It was copied and  
translated into Spanish, Danish, Swedish, Welsh, Polish, Gaelic, Russian,  
Bohemian, Dutch, Catalan, German, French, Italian, Chinese, Modern Greek,  
and into phonetic writing.

Franklin never set much regard on his scientific papers. He  
had been forced to write them in moments stolen from his political af-  
fairs. He realized and deplored the infinite labours  
Scientific Papers and distractions that interfered with his exploration  
of scientific fields. He was dissatisfied with these  
papers, and, because they were so hastily written he said that they  
were random and imperfect. He called them "Loose Thoughts", "Conjec-

\* Life and Writings of Benjamin Franklin; Smythe, Vol. I., page 39





tures and Suppositions", as though apologizing for them.

Modesty, simplicity, and sincerity ring through the lines of his scientific papers. Every paper is characterized by absolute perspicacity of thought and directness of style. He saw the problem as it really was and so presented it. Obscurity is far from him. He had not the advantage of scientific terms, yet his papers on philosophy and science are clear-cut, easy to read, and lucid. An example of the simplicity and directness of his illustrations is exhibited in the paper  
(1)  
on meteorology that claimed northeast storms originated in the southwest. "Suppose a great tract of country, land and sea, to wit, Florida and the Bay of Mexico, to have clear weather for several days, and to be heated by the sun, and its air thereby exceedingly rarefied. Suppose the country northeastward, as Pennsylvania, New England, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland, to be at the same time covered with clouds, and its air chilled and condensed. The rarefied air being lighter must rise, and the denser air next to it will press into its place; that will be followed by the next denser air, that by the next and so on. Thus, when I have a fire in my chimney, there is a current of air constantly flowing from the door to the chimney; but the beginning of the motion was at the chimney, when the air being rarefied by the fire rising, its place was supplied by the cooler air that was next to it, and the place of that by the next, and so on to the door. So the water in a long sluice or mill race, being stopped by a gate, is at rest like the air in a calm; but as soon as you open the gate at one end to let it out, the water next the gate begins first to move, that which is next to it follows: and so, though the water proceeds forward to the

(1) See Works' Section, page 44





gate, the motion which began there runs backwards, if one may so speak, to the upper end of the race, where the water is last in motion. We have on this continent a long ridge of mountains running from north-east to southwest; and the coast runs the same course."

His scientific papers were utilitarian in purpose. While writing his observations he tried to fathom how they could be of benefit to mankind.

One outstanding characteristic of Franklin's writing was his humor. He fairly bubbled over with that species of humor we choose to call "American Wit". There was no desire to cut deeply into the indi-

vidual's feelings nor into the feelings of groups, rather Franklin's Wit a playful inclination to fool and to poke fun at common

characteristics. An amusing illustration of his wit is the supposed account written by Alice Addertongue to Benjamin Franklin \*in which she relates an interesting observation on gossip. "My mother, good woman, and I have heretofore differ'd upon this account. She argued, that Scandal spoilt all good Conversation; and I insisted, that without it there would be no such thing. Our Dispute once rose so high, that we parted Tea Tables, and I concluded to entertain my Acquaintance in the Kitchen. The first Day of this Separation we both drank tea at the same Time, but she with her Visitors in the Parlor. She would not hear of the least Objection to any one's Character, but began a new sort of Discourse in some queer philosophical Manner as this: 'I am mightily pleas'd sometimes,' says she, 'when I consider and observe, that the World is not so bad as People out of Humour imagine it to be. There is something amiable, some good quality or other,

\* The Life and Writings of Benjamin Franklin; Smythe, Vol. I, page 191





in everybody. If we were only to speak of People that are least respected, there is such a one is very dutiful to her Father, and methinks has a fine Set of Teeth; such a one is very respectful to her Husband; such a one is very kind to her poor neighbours, and besides has a very handsome Shape; such a one is always ready to serve a Friend, and in my Opinion there is not a Woman in Town that has a more agreeable Air and Gait.' This fine kind of Talk, which lasted near half an Hour, she concluded by saying, 'I do not doubt but every one of you have made the like Observations, and I should be glad to have the Conversation continued upon this Subject.' Just at this Juncture I peep'd in at the Door, and never in my Life before saw such a Set of simple vacant Countenances. They looked somehow neither glad, nor sorry, nor angry, nor pleas'd, nor indifferent, nor attentive; but (excuse the simile) like so many wooden images of Rie Doe. I in the Kitchin had already begun a ridiculous story of Mr ..... 's Intrigue with his Maid, and his Wife's Behavior upon the Discovery; At some Passages we laugh'd heartily, and one of the gravest of Mama's company, without making any Answer to her Discourse, got up to go and see what the Girls were so merry about: She was follow'd by a Second, and shortly after by a Third, till at last the old Gentlewoman found herself quite alone, and, being convince'd that her Project was impracticable, came herself and finish'd her Tea with us; ever since which Saul also has been among the Prophets, and our Disputes lie dormant."

There are many other illustrations of Franklin's wit throughout his lifetime, from passages in the early "Silence Dogood Papers" to the witty letters he wrote to his friends in England. A great many





of his humorous selections are marked by extravagance and impossibility. Take for instance the impossibility in a bit of local news as \*reported by Benjamin Franklin in the "Pennsylvania Gazette": "An unhappy man, one Sturgis, upon some difference with his wife, determined to drown himself in the river, and she (kind wife) went with him, it seems, to see it faithfully performed, and accordingly stood by silent and unconcerned during the whole transaction: He jumped in near Carpenter's Wharf, but was timely taken out again, before what he came about was thoroughly effected, so that they were both obliged to return home as they came, and put up for that time with the disappointment."

His fondness for practical joking and satire is seen in the (1)  
\*\* experience Franklin enjoyed when "An Edict of the King of Prussia" was published. He wrote to his son(October 6, 1773): "What made it more noticed was, that the people in reading it were, as the Use of Satire. phrase is, taken in, till they got half through it, and imagined it a real edict, to which mistake I suppose the King of Prussia's character must have contributed. I was down at Lord Le Despencer's when the post brought that day's papers. Mr. Whitehead was there, too (Paul Whitehead, the author of 'Manner's') who runs early through all the papers, and tells the company what he finds remarkable. He had them in another room, and we were chatting in the breakfast parlour, when he came running into us, out of breath, with the paper in his hand. 'Here', says he, 'here's news for ye! Here's the King of Prussia, claiming a right to this kingdom!' All stared, and I as much as anybody, and he went on to read it. When he had read two or three paragraphs, a gentleman present said, 'Damn his impudence,

\* The Life and Writings of Benjamin Franklin; Smythe, Vol. I, page 167,168

\*\* The Life and Writings of Benjamin Franklin; Smythe, Vol. I, page 173

(1) See work's section, page 41





I dare say we shall hear by the next post, that he is upon his march with one hundred thousand men to back this.' Whitehead, who is very shrewd, soon began to smoke it, and looking in my face, said, 'I'll be hanged if this is not some of your American jokes upon us!'" This keen and severe satire of Franklin's was published throughout England.

Franklin's satire could be less gentle than this, and in one piece of writing at least, he rose to the height of Swift. It was the "Supplement to the Boston Independent Chronicle", and it was prompted by the barbarities some Indian allies of the King had committed. The one sentence: "Father, we wish to send these scalps over the water to the great King, that he may regard them and be refreshed; and that he may see our faithfulness in destroying his enemies, and be convinced that his presents have not been made to ungrateful people", is, indeed, filled with the bitterness of a Swift.

The charge has been brought against Franklin that he may be tracked for the thirty years of the "Gazette" by the smudgy trail he leaves behind him. It has been maintained that his humour is coarse \*and his mood of mind Rabelaisian. Smythe says that Franklin "out-Smolletts Smollett in his letters to young women at home and experienced matrons abroad". It is true that Franklin did, at times, tell highly offensive jokes, but I fail to see justice in the criticism of Smythe. Franklin was eighteenth century in taste. He was a man of his times, and he expressed his times, It seems to me that Franklin wrote exceptionally decent articles considering the vast quantity of his writings and in comparison with the work of some of his contemporaries.

Franklin's literary efforts were not entirely confined to

\* The Life and Writings of Benjamin Franklin; Smythe, Vol. I, page 171





serious productions and humorous efforts. He found time to write charming personal letters and exquisite imaginative compositions.

Imaginative  
Writings      The letter to Madame Brillon in which he described the life of the ephemera is charming. It was in writing of such types that Franklin escaped from the affairs of state.

Then, too, it is to be noted that Franklin's literary efforts during the greater part of his lifetime were official and scientific works composed to meet some present occasion. His humorous compositions were likewise written for occasions. All were hurriedly written; never corrected; consequently they did not show the finish they would have had Franklin spent time upon them. His works of real literary merit are those that deal with personal advice,--as how to be happy, -- or how to attain wealth. Hume expressed the sentiment with which Europe regarded \* Franklin, the man of science, when he wrote to him: "America has sent us many good things, gold, silver, sugar, tobacco, indigo, etc., but you are the first philosopher and indeed the first great man of letters for whom we are beholden to her. It is our own fault that we have not kept him; whence it appears that we do not agree with Solomon that wisdom is above gold; for we take care never to send back an ounce of the latter, which we once lay our fingers upon."

Hume is perfectly correct in his estimate of Franklin, for Franklin was a great man of letters. His range of thought was enormous and his expressions of that thought were always written

Estimate of  
Franklin's  
Literary  
Style      in a clear, lucid style that interested the reader and very often amused him. The breadth of Franklin's interests was unusually large and at the end of his life Franklin began

\* The Life and Writings of Benjamin Franklin; Smythe, Vol. I, page 45





to show an interest in a type of writing he had hitherto neglected. This is his imaginative works,--the clever, light essays he wrote for the amusement and edification of his friends. The few essays of this type that Franklin left for us seem to indicate that had Franklin spent his life in literary pursuits, had he been allowed to escape the affairs of state, he might have been not only a great man of letters, but also, a great literary genius. His imaginative writings, along with his unfailing sense of humour, show that there was an abundance of latent literary talent in the make up of Benjamin Franklin.

#### B. Development of Franklin's Political Thought.

Franklin at the time of his death had created for himself a magnificent political position. He was a bourgeois, and what a bour-

\* geois! Fay tells us that before Franklin no one had  
Bourgeois  
ever been able to play the bourgeois. Voltaire, Comte de Ferney, had aimed too high: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the solitary walker, had aimed too low; neither had belonged to any particular class. Franklin had become a bourgeois and he knew how to live his rank.

The year 1730 saw Franklin established as an independent  
(1)  
printer in the city of Philadelphia and from that year on he decided to become a financial success and a political leader. It was due to  
(2)  
the Junto that Franklin first found his place in the political life of Pennsylvania, for, after the project he had attained recognition. Franklin determined to make use of politics, for he comprehended that through proper alliances he could increase his business, just as by good business principles he had obtained more friends. His one aim at this period was to be discreet. He understood that if he were to be-

(1) See page 10

(2) See page 9

\* The Apostle of Modern Times; Bernard Fay, page 515





come a colonial leader he would have to proceed very cautiously. He decided to keep away from any active participation in domestic campaigns (1) so as to be able to lead in larger matters. When he joined the Masons, he adhered more openly to his Whig Sympathies. Franklin had inherited his Whig tendencies from his father, but he was ever cautious and always aware of the fact that politics often proved to be a disastrous and fatal game. So it was with the utmost deliberation that Franklin kept his newspaper non-partisan and very slowly changed it into a political and financial sheet. He stated issues clearly and calmly, offering remedies when possible, but steering away from any definite stand. The position he occupied was, in reality, the role of arbiter-er standing between the artisans and the rich bourgeois, understanding

Arbitrer that if he were to become the leader of the bourgeois

that he must have the support of as many classes as possible.

(2)

The argument over taxation, in 1757, forced Franklin to take a stand. He came out definitely for the Quakers and the people, as against the Penns and the Gentlemen. He was leader of the bourgeois in Pennsylvania and steadily his position changed, he, becoming, in turn, leader of the bourgeois in America, and, finally in France, too!

Franklin's political theories, however, centered about three great ideas: the union of the American colonies, the British Empire, and the ideal of universal peace. Each of these projects were wise and feasible but they were ahead of their time.

The union of the American colonies was one of Franklin's favorite brain children. He had attempted in 1754 to point out to the

(1) See page 10

(2) See page 20





(1)

Albany Congress the advantages of the plan. Franklin's intellect perceived how easy it would be to obtain peace along the frontiers if all of the thirteen colonies were bound into a confederation. He counted upon

the fear and the hatred that the colonists held for the Unifier of the Colonies. French to bring about the acceptance of this practical cooperation. Once cooperation was realized Franklin felt sure that it would endure. The immediate commercial and internal growth that it would bring would assure this.

This plan was, at first, purely colonial in thought, in that Franklin was making the part played by the Crown minor. The Crown was merely the unit about which the confederation was to form. We know that the colonies refused to accept this plan. Now Franklin above being a loyal citizen of Philadelphia was a loyal citizen of England. He believed that the theories of Great Britain were the best the world had ever seen and that only through close association with her could the colonies prosper. Therefore, when the colonies refused to accept the plan of Franklin, he decided to enlarge it and to convince the English ministry of its many advantages. He attempted to point out that the confederation of the colonies would insure the execution of the British laws on the Continent and prepare for the future. He wanted to establish an Anglo-Saxon unification with its capital, king, and federal parliament in London, the latter conserving the rights of Magna Charta, and sending representatives to the Imperial Parliament. Franklin's immense plan had grown from the germ of mere colonial federation for defense purposes. He lived to help bring about a great confederation but one that he had never dreamed of nor hoped for. He, up to the

(1) See page 18.





very last moment before the Revolutionary War, was a loyal follower of the British form of Government. He was extremely sorrowful when war had to be declared.

Once war was declared, Franklin was just as loyal a citizen to American as he had been to King George. He even worked himself up to such a pitch as to imagine he hated some of his best English friends. This was but a passing phase and Franklin's good sense soon returned. The successes of the man in France, too, were due to his great social success there and his good sense. He managed to turn the immense influence of the French nation towards the colonies.

Franklin never believed in war. He had always opposed it as a needless waste of human life and a waste in the pecuniary sense. He

Peace Advocate      \* wrote: "All wars are follies, very expensive and mischievous ones; when will mankind be convinced in this, and agree to settle their disputes by arbitration .....what vast additions to the Conveniences and Comforts of living might mankind have acquired if the money spent in war **had** been employed in works of public utility." He was a politician in the true sense of the word, always seeking the best interests for his country and for humanity. In connection with his ideas on peace, it is interesting to note that <sup>in 1784</sup> he urged universal peace. He wanted to eliminate warfare from the history of the world. With this end in view he suggested that America, England, and France draw up a treaty outlawing war. He believed that if these three great nations united in such a worthy project that other nations would, per force, be obliged to keep away from war. Such a political idea was too much for the eighteenth century, and it is still too noble for humanity to

\* The Life and Writings of Benjamin Franklin; Smythe, Vol. 1, page





attain.

Benjamin Franklin did not agree with the form of government that the United States of America finally adopted. He was one that believed there was too much government to it. He agreed to its acceptance, realizing that the time was past when he had enough health or vigor to carry out and finish a campaign for a different form of constitution and because he knew his negative vote for its refusal would cause many people to turn against it. Franklin did not want this to happen, as he could find no better solution then. He felt that a better solution was for the future Americans to find.

What was Franklin's political development, then? He held throughout his lifetime to the opinion that the English form of government when administered rightly was the best form in the world. He

progressed in that he, at the time of the Revolution, Politician of Humanity sacrificed himself, his money, and his time to the cause, something he would never have done twenty-five years earlier. His opinions about war and the state never changed except that as the older he grew the more he became convinced in the evils of warfare.

Franklin's political thought was not Pennsylvanian, not English, not American--it was universal. His theories were those of a friend of man and all of his political thoughts were put before the public as such. He was working for the best interests of humanity always. In the early part of his life he did all of his deeds, whether political or religious, with a view to self-advancement. We must remember, however, that never once did one of those deeds bring poor





political results. During the last part of his life he fought for America, but during the very latest years of his life for humanity. His last political work proves this--his pamphlet read to Congress urging the abolition of slavery.

C. Development of Franklin's Moral and Religious Thought.

Franklin's early "errata" had showed him that there must be something wrong with his system of morals. He had given little thought to the difference between right and wrong until his unfortunate London  
(1)  
experiences taught him that there is a sharp line of demarcation.

Franklin had been prone to regard man not as a social being but as an  
(2)  
animal. The severe illness of 1727 had made him see more clearly the

fallacies of his position. He, therefore, worked after  
Morals  
System this illness to make himself virtuous. His attempt at  
perfection included the practicing of thirteen virtues:

"Temperance, Silence, Order, Resolution, Industry, Frugality, Sincerity, Justice, Moderation, Cleanliness, Tranquility, Chastity, and Humility". Franklin was very practical in his way of attaining to these virtues. He made a little notebook for himself and ruled the pages, writing the days of the week at the top, and the virtues to practice along the side. Each week he attacked the attaining of a new virtue in particular. He was very serious about the matter and gave himself a great deal of trouble in trying to attain his objective, moral perfection. He applied himself assiduously to performing all of the virtues in his tables of  
\*the moral law, but not with the same success for each virtue. "If it were easy for him to be resolute, frugal, and industrious, as his father had taught him and as he was inclined by temperament, if he found pleas-

\* The Apostle of Modern Times; Bernard Fay, page 118

(1) See page 6

(2) See page 8





ure in keeping clean (for he did not detest his body and liked exercises, swimming and hard work), it was more difficult for him to remain sober and chaste in an epoch that was anything but virtuous."

He made the performance of the other virtues seem a task almost glorious in its interest by reason of the ingenious ways he devised for attaining perfection in practice. His justice was very exact, but it was not pitiless. His own experience led him to tolerance and the overlooking of the faults of others and this attitude secured for him many friends. The exercise of humility, moreover, became more and more a part of him, and he always knew how to be skillful and moderate. These characteristics helped him to get along in the world without creating too many enemies. In the practice of sincerity he was not so fortunate. He was honest. In fact Franklin's greatest desire was to leave behind him the reputation of an honest man, but the deep subtlety of his mind never permitted him to be simple or absolute, so that, as a result, his good faith and sincerity were sometimes doubted.

Although any one carrying out all of the virtues designated as desirable by Franklin would have arrived at a Godlike state, Ben never reached that condition. Nor did he want to. He did not believe that the satisfaction of natural desires should be entirely suppressed but rather ruled by reason. Reasoned practice of virtue would assure

\* happiness here and hereafter. "The truth is that temperance, justice, charity, etc., are virtues whether practiced with or against our inclinations, and the man who practices them, merits our life and esteem; self-denial is neither good nor bad, but as it is applied. He that

\* The Life and Writings of Benjamin Franklin; Smythe, Vol. I, page 326





denies a vicious inclination is virtuous in proportion to his resolutions; but the most perfect virtue is above all temptations; such as the virtue of the saints in heaven; and he who does a foolish, indecent or wicked thing, merely because it is contrary to his inclinations (like some mad enthusiasts I have read of, who ran about naked under the notion of taking the cross) is not practicing a reasonable virtue, but is a lunatic."

As Franklin grew older his moral life became steadier. In his almanac he showed how wealth was of use not only because it assured material comforts, but because it made a life of high morality easier. In the "Pennsylvania Gazette", too, we get this thought that it is easier for a man with money to be moral than it is for one with no money. Was Franklin trying to excuse his own youthful indiscretions committed during the period in which he was not rich? It is obvious that as Franklin increased in public position, wealth, and age, he became a better man--his moral character, although he no longer marked off his virtues, was more consistent. I imagine, however, that this improvement was not due to his acquisition of wealth so much as it was due to the fact that he was "growing up". Then, too, Franklin had put his faith in science, and as he demanded a reasonable religion, so he demanded a reasonable code of ethics. He turned his back on the morals of the old Christian school and faced front with progressive science. His life is evidence of this. In his almanac he had many hard, bare homilies upon the gospel of getting on in the world, and he so much emphasized the duty and necessity of scrimping and saving, that the people of his day, as we still do, often confused Franklin and "Poor Richard". Only after Franklin had





made his own fortune do we see him as he really was, unselfish and moral for the sake of morality itself. As he neared the closing day of his life, he often spoke on the necessity of virtue and he carried with him, right up to his death, the conviction, that true happiness comes only through a life of virtue.

Benjamin Franklin's conception of God was greatly influenced by the pagan doctrines which were so prevalent in the eighteenth century. He had been reared on a strict Calvinistic diet, Franklin's conception of God but soon other impressions were added to the teachings of Calvinism. He read, early in life, the theories of the two great Deists, Collins and Shaftsbury. He had at the time already ceased attending church because he did not want to give up time from reading, and, as the Sundays went on, he became less and less ready to respond to the call of church bells. Franklin early turned away from the orthodox Calvinism of his parents and chose reason for his guide, all the while, however, holding to a religion which the sun and animals of the earth continually proclaim and for which the human soul is continually seeking. So, then, Franklin's first idea of God of his own development was viewed through reason and nature. He called himself a Deist. He dedicated himself to Reason and Liberty. He decided that the Calvinistic religion was dangerous because it seemed to support tyranny and superstition. Only was religion worthwhile when it influenced man's conduct for the better.

In London, Franklin went farther into this type of theology.  
(1)  
There it was that Wollaston's work "A Dissertation on Religion and Nature" aroused his ire. He replied to this treatise with a pamphlet in

(1) See page 7





which he began, by quoting a hundred axioms, to prove that pleasure and pain are the same. He did his best to prove that the robber is as virtuous as the law maker, since every one acts in accordance with the decrees of God and with the nature and order of things. He stated moreover: "I would not be understood by this to encourage or defend theft; 'tis only for the sake of Argument and will certainly have no ill effect....."

He retained in this period, however, some of his Calvinistic doctrines such as the belief in an omnipotent God and predestination, but "above all he was the disciple of the French Sensualists and the English Deists from whom he borrowed the mathematics of pleasure."

\*Fay lists some of the doctrines of Franklin at this period as follows:

"I. A creature when endow'd with Life or Consciousness, is made capable of Uneasiness or Pain.

II. This Pain produces desire to be freed from it in exact proportion to itself.

III. The accompaniment of this Desire produces an equal Pleasure.

IV. Pleasure is consequently equal to Pain."

All of which results in the following conclusions:

I. That every Creature has as much Pleasure as Pain.

II. That life is not preferable to insensibility: for Pleasure and Pain destroy one another.....

III. No state of Life can be happier than the present, because Pleasure and Pain are inseparable.

\* The Apostle of Modern Times; Fay, page 93





Thus, according to Franklin, Paradise, the haven of compensation, could not exist. Even the soul is not immortal, he maintained, or at least immortal as the Christian thinks, for the soul is made up of ideas, ideas come to us through our senses, and with death our senses disappear. The soul ceases to think. And to cease to think is little different from ceasing to be."

This was no Christian theory, no Christian conception of God. It is with ease that we can trace in his writings the changing ideas that Franklin held in regard to God. On November 20, 1728, Franklin published his "Articles of Belief", and here he outlined for himself his principles of religion as conceived by him after the severe illness  
(1)  
of 1727.

\* "I believe there is one supreme, most perfect Being, Author and Father of the Gods themselves. For I believe that Man is not the most perfect Being, but one, rather that as there are many degrees of Beings his Inferior, so there are many Degrees of Beings superior to him.....

But since there is in All Men something like a natural principle, which inclines them to Devotion, or the Worship or some unseen Power.....Therefore I think it seems required of me, and my Duty as a Man, to pay Divine Regards to Something.

I conceive then, that the Infinite has created many beings or Gods, vastly superior to Man.

It may be that these Gods are immortal; or it may be that after many Ages, they are changed, and others supply their Places.

Howbeit, I conceive that each of these is exceeding wise and

\* The Life and Writings of Benjamin Franklin; Smythe, Vol II., page 92,  
93, 91.

(1) See page 8





good and very powerful, and that Each has made for himself one glorious Sun, attended with a beautiful and admirable System of Planets.

It is that Particular Wise and Good God, who is the author and owner of our System, that I propose for the object of my praise and adoration.....

Next to the praise resulting from and due to his Wisdom, I believe he is pleas'd and delights in the Happiness of those he has created; and since without Virtue Man can have no happiness in this World, I firmly believe he delights to see me Virtuous, because he is pleased to see me Happy....."

This conception of God arose at length because Franklin had need of a God, a God, whom he had hitherto considered useless, until the crisis of his illness in 1727. This new God of his was in no way like the Christian God. He demanded of this God virtue, knowledge, and a promise of an after-life--probably metempsychosis--as his half-serious, half-ironical epitaph seems to indicate:

\*

"The Body

of

Benjamin Franklin

Printer

(Like the cover of an old book

Its contents torn out

And stript of its lettering and gilding),

Lies here, food for worms.

Yet the work itself shall not be lost,

for it will, as he believed, appear once more

In a new and more beautiful edition,

Corrected and amended

by

The Author"

\* The Apostle of Modern Times; Fay, page 116





From this polytheistic position Franklin slowly veered into a more orthodox one. He came to want to be assured of immortality and often discussed this question with his intimate friends. At the close of his life, he had finally reached a point akin to orthodoxy. To a French friend he confided: "I cannot suspect the annihilation of Souls or believe that He will suffer the daily waste of millions of minds ready made that now exist and put himself to the continual trouble of making new ones. Thus finding myself to exist in the world, I believe I shall in some shape or other still exist". It is interesting to note that one of Franklin's justifications for his belief in immortality is based upon a purely practical theory. The old doctrine of the transmigration of souls intrigued him. Franklin did not doubt immortality, but he had many doubts on the way immortality was carried into being.

One other thought of God was held by Franklin,--one he had adhered to from the days of his polytheistic beliefs, but one that he believed more firmly in as he approached the closing days of his life. This theory was that God governs in the affairs of man. It is significant that it was Benjamin Franklin, the man who had so often shocked his century with his unusual beliefs, who is responsible for the custom of opening every session of the Congress of the United States of America with a prayer invoking Divine Guidance. One of his last speeches to Congress was delivered upon this theme. It follows:

\* "The longer I live the more convincing proofs I see of this truth that God governs in the affairs of man. And if the sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His Notice, is it probable that an em-

\* The Life and Writings of Benjamin Franklin; Smythe, Vol. V., page 600,  
\*\* " " " " " " " " " " VI., 601  
page 89





pire can rise without His aid? We have been assured, Sir, in the sacred writings that 'except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it'. I firmly believe this, and I also believe that, without his concurring aid, we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel.'"

The letter to Ezra Stiles, which follows, written just a few months before Franklin's death gives his final conception of God, of Jesus of Nazareth, and of immortality.

\* "You desire to know something of my religion. It is the first time I have been questioned upon it. But I cannot take your curiosity amiss, and shall endeavor in a few words to gratify it. Here is my creed: I believe in one God, the creator of the universe. That he governs it by his Providence. That he ought to be worshipped. That the most acceptable service we render to him is doing good to his other children. That the soul of man is immortal, and will be treated with justice in another life respecting its conduct in this. These I take to be the fundamental points in all sound religion, and I regard them as you do in whatever sect I meet with them. As to Jesus of Nazareth, my opinion of whom you particularly desire, I think the system of morals and his religion as he left them to us, the best the world ever saw or is like to see; but I apprehend it has received various corruptive changes, and I have with most of the present dissenters in England, some doubts as to his divinity; though it is a question I do not dogmatise upon, having never studied it, and think it needless to busy myself with it now, when I expect soon to have an opportunity of knowing the truth with less trouble. I see no harm, however, in its being be-

\* The Life and Writings of Benjamin Franklin; Smythe, Vol. X, page 83





lieved, if the belief has good consequences, as probably it has, of making his doctrines more respected and more observed; especially as I do not perceive that the Supreme Being takes it amiss by distinguishing the unbeliever in his government of the world with any particular marks of his displeasure. I shall only add respecting myself, that having experienced the goodness of that being in conducting me prosperously thro' a long life, I have no doubt of its continuance in the next, tho' without the smallest conceit of meriting such goodness....."

Benjamin Franklin's religion embraced all creeds. After his London experiences, he became convinced that by a toleration of all

creeds he would best become a public figure and also Franklin's attitude to- believed in such toleration for other than reasons of wards creeds. personal advancement. He urged toleration of all forms of religion, feeling that vital religion suffered from an over-sectarian spirit. As early as 1738 he expressed these sentiments in a letter

\* to his father: "My mother grieves that one of her sons is an Arian, another an Arminian. What an Arminian or an Ariam is, I cannot say that I very well know.. The truth is I make such distinctions very little my study. I think vital religion has always suffered when orthodoxy is more regarded than virtue." This view was very sincere but we must remember that Franklin was in part prompted to utter these views because he saw how his own popularity and prestige would be increased by them. Toward the mid-part of his life he was still expressing the same sentiments. To Joseph Huey he wrote in an attempt to point out how strict adherence to a creed diminishes the worth-while values in life.

It was in this same spirit of toleration that Franklin estab-

\* The Life and Writings of Benjamin Franklin; Smythe, Vol. II, page 215





(1)

lished his "Society of the Free and Easy". The doctrines of the society's creed contained the essentials of all known Christian religions and were free of everything that might shock "professors of religion". He felt that such a society would help to establish and promote one another's interest, business, and personal advancement in life. His spirit of toleration grew even more as Franklin advanced in years, and the older he became the more convinced he became that only through the lack of religious persecution could religion be of best benefit to mankind. In his early life Franklin's advocacy of toleration had been motivated largely by its usefulness to himself, but in his later years we can feel assured that he expressed the belief in toleration for its own sake.

\* Two years before his death he wrote to Ezra Stiles: "I have ever let others enjoy their religious Sentiments, without reflecting on them for those that seemed to me unsupportable and even absurd. All Sects here, and we have a great variety, have experienced my good will in assisting them with Subscriptions for building their new places of worship; and, as I have never opposed any of their doctrines, I hope to go out of the world in peace with them all." This attitude of inter-toleration was remarkably sane for such an age. Carl Van Doren tells us \*\*that Franklin was one "who led this whole country, and not merely New England toward the blessed sun of cheerfulness and reason."

Throughout the greater portion of Franklin's career his religion expressed itself not so much in the concerns of the future world as it did in the concerns of this world. Franklin was This world-  
liness. "Worldly-minded" and most of his actions were directed  
either towards his own success and happiness or towards

\* The Life and Writings of Benjamin Franklin; Smuthe, Vol.X, page 85

\*\* Benjamin Franklin and Jonathan Edwards; Carl Van Doren, Introd. X  
(1) See page 10





the success and happiness of others.

Franklin's doctrine of service, however, was not first promulgated because he really wanted to serve God and man. He put it into use rather because it helped with Benjamin Franklin's personal success. In the first half of his life Benjamin was quite openly doing all of his deeds with a threefold purpose: first, and foremost, service to Benjamin Franklin; secondly, service to man; thirdly, service to God.

In 1738 Franklin wrote to his father that he felt God appreciated service to mankind more than any set religious thoughts."..... the Scriptures assure me, that at the last day we shall not be examined for what we thought but what we did; and our commendation will not be, that we said, Lord, Lord, but that we did good to our fellow-creatures."

\* Later to Joseph Huey he wrote: "The faith you mention has certainly its use in the world; I do not desire to see it diminished, nor would I endeavor to lessen it in any man. But I wish it were more productive of good works; works of kindness, charity, mercy, and public spirit; not holiday keeping, sermon-reading, or hearing; performing church ceremonies or making long prayer, filled with flatteries and compliments, despised even by wise men, and much less capable of pleasing the Deity... Your great master thought much less of the outward appearances and professions, than many of his modern disciples. He preferred the doers of the world to the mere hearers."

This desire for doing good works became more and more embedded in Franklin's character, and, after he had reached financial success, he continued to do good for its own sake. His interests in educa-

\* The Life and Writings of Benjamin Franklin; Smythe, Vol.II, page 215

\*\* The Life and Writings of Benjamin Franklin; Smythe, Vol. III, page 145





tion, in humanity, and in public affairs demonstrate this. He had spent his life-time learning how to live up to a practical working religion. His religion centers, during the greatest portion of his \* life, about the principle of utility. "He had learned to discard absolute beauty, absolute truth, absolute good, as well as evil, voluptuousness, frivolity, and elegance." He had managed to grasp the practical, the "this worldliness" side of religion and to give it human picturesque form.

Franklin's interest in the worldly side of religion at times carried him into the facetiousness. For instance, the Reverend George Whitefield was in Boston and had written to Franklin that he intended soon to arrive in Philadelphia, but that he knew not where to stay because his old host had moved to Germantown. Franklin replied: "You know my house; if you can make shift with its scanty accommodations, you will be most heartily welcome." He replied that if I made that kind offer for Christ's sake I should not miss of a reward. And I returned: 'Don't let me be mistaken; it was not for Christ's sake, but for your sake.'

An instance of the practical side of Benjamin's religion and of the intense interest he had in this world is seen in the following occasion: Whitefield was making a speech urging the people \*\*\*to contribute funds to the establishment of a college. "He had a loud and clear voice, and articulated his words so perfectly that he might be heard and understood at a great distance, especially as his auditors observed the most perfect silence. He preached one evening from the top of the courthouse steps, which are in the middle of Market

\* The Apostle of Modern Times; Bernard Fay, page 515

\*\* Benjamin Franklin's Autobiography; Macmillan Edition, page 106

\*\*\* " " " " " " 106, 107





Street and on the west side of Second Street, which crosses it at right angles. Both streets were filled with his hearers to a considerable distance. Being among the hindmost in Market Street, I had the curiosity to learn how far he could be heard by retiring backward down the street toward the river; and I found his voice distinct till I came near Front Street where some noise in that street obscured it. Imagining then a semi-circle, of which my distance should be the radius, and that it was filled with auditors, to each of whom I allowed two square feet, I computed that he might well be heard by more than thirty thousand. This reconciled me to the newspaper account of his having preached to twenty-five thousand people in the fields, and to the history of generals haranguing whole armies of which I had sometimes doubted." The impassioned sermons of Whitefield were not great enough to draw Franklin's attention away from the things of this world into the realms of angels and devils.

The main theory of Franklin's religion, then, had to do with this world. He believed from the early Philadelphian days to the last days of his life that God would judge man not by his conception of God, not by his attitude towards creed, but by the good service he performed for humanity.

The spirit of this worldliness was predominate throughout Franklin's career and it is only towards the twilight of his life that Franklin began to turn to the other world. He had always been one who felt prayer was necessary. Even when he was a polytheist he had composed a form of worship and prayer to follow, but his prayers were made at that time because he felt it was wise to pray. If there were





any truth in God, then it would be well to stay in the good graces of God. Therefore, Ben prayed. As he grew older, however, Benjamin began to feel a spiritual stirring within him. The mysteries of nature and the goodness of God began to overwhelm him, and, then, for the first time, Benjamin Franklin became interested in the other world. His prayers were uttered with deep sincerity and with a profound love  
\* of God ringing through them. He often said: "Can I doubt that God who has taken care of me for more than threescore years will cease to care for me when I am dead?" He was at the end of his life entirely convinced of God's goodness.

Prayer had become a real force to Benjamin Franklin. He felt that prayers, if sincere, no matter where they were uttered or  
(1)  
how, had great power. The speech he made at the Constitutional Convention gave evidence of this. It makes us like Franklin better to know that he who started his life's work as a pure utilitarian in religion gradually progressed spiritually until by the time of his death he had managed to grasp for himself a true bond with God, and an honest conviction that in the next world he would find true happiness in immortality.

#### IV. Utilitarianism and Humanitarianism

The course of Franklin's well-directed life and the development of his thought indicate that there were two outstanding tendencies in his character, and as his life career can be divided into two main periods, "The Poor Richard Almanack Period" and "The European Period", so can we place these two tendencies, utilitarianism and humanitarianism, into these periods. Utilitarianism, in its very per-

\* Life and Writings of Benjamin Franklin; Smythe, Vol. X, page 39  
(1) See page 32





sonal aspect, definitely belongs to the early period, while humanitarianism, and utilitarianism, only in its broadest aspects, belong to the late period.

Franklin was a personal utilitarian, by that I mean that all of his actions and ideas were accomplished and conceived of with the end of personal gain involved. At a very young age, he decided that he would become a financial success and a popular political figure. With this thought uppermost Franklin directed all of his efforts towards these ends. He worked early and late in the little printing shop, realizing that industry, or an appearance of it, would gain for him patrons and friends. He lived up faithfully to the maxims of "Poor Richard" and by slavish adherence to the maxims reached the goal. The speech of "Father Abraham" is a clear-cut outline of the manner of life Franklin practiced during the early years of his life, and by using the methods he advocated in that article, Franklin became, at the age of forty-two financially independent. The many business ventures that he undertook all proved successful.. It was Franklin who first introduced newspaper advertising and by this project of his he reaped a goodly sum of money.

The political plans of Franklin were likewise motivated by  
(1)  
this idea of personal utility. The role of arbitrator that he assumed for so many years was merely carried out because Franklin knew that through such a role he could obtain more friends for himself and as a consequence, more business. More business and more friends would lead, eventually, into a position nearing popularity. The great many public reforms that Franklin made campaigns for during his thirty

(1) See page 60





years in Philadelphia had this same motif behind them.

His religious and scientific interests were dominated by a utilitarian spirit. Franklin would have no God until he was thoroughly convinced that it was to his best interests to have one. Franklin would never make scientific experiments because he was interested in the causes that were underneath certain natural phenomena, but rather because he was interested in the possible utilities that might result from these scientific facts.

This utilitarian strain, then, ran through his religion, his moral system, his interest in science, his friends, his public reforms, his newspaper articles and other written matter, in fact through his whole life in all of its many phases.

It would be very nearly impossible for one to go through life without exhibiting some impulses that proved there was a strain of humanitarianism in one. Franklin did love humanity but he had little time to show his love for it in the early years of his life. As I said before, Franklin was looking after his own interests and so occupied was he in that pursuit that he had little time for other people, but after he had reached financial independence he began to demonstrate more and more a hitherto hidden strain of humanitarianism. His personal utilitarianism first began to extend itself. Franklin began telling others how he had reached such a worth while position and <sup>ing</sup>urged them to do likewise. He tried to impress upon the people that they should follow the principles that he had used during his life. It seemed as if Franklin wanted all humanity to become better. In Europe Franklin gave up all of his time to the service of others. There is a little story of Franklin that





shows how greatly in his later period he wanted to benefit mankind. A friend had borrowed some money from Franklin, and he had lent it only on the condition that the friend pay it back, not to Franklin, but to some one in need, that person, in turn, paying his debt to another, and so on indefinitely. Franklin had given a great deal of his income to the American cause; he had even sacrificed his home comforts to his country. That latter was a great sacrifice, indeed, for he loved an orderly and comfortable home above everything. The last years of Franklin's life were calm and serene. He was happy in the knowledge that his early ambitions had been realized and in the fact that he had been able to help others.

There was one great result from this humanitarianism. I call it a result of humanitarianism because it is almost an extension of his love for mankind. As Franklin's interests grew from personal desires to humanity's problems, so did his interest in humanity grow into an interest in God. Franklin, the patriarch, nearing the closing day of his life had changed. There was much, it is true, of the young Ben left, but there was more that was new. He had grown from pure utilitarian into one interested in the spiritual world for its own sake, and his step into that state of mind was by way of all humanity, the world over. Franklin was a great American; he rendered priceless services to his country, still it would be utterly stupid to think of him as merely a friend to America; it would be somewhat of a fallacy to call him merely a friend of man, Franklin died,--a friend of God.





## V. Summary

1. A biography has been given as a means of presenting more specifically and fully the growth of Franklin's thought. The spirit of the times of Franklin is incidentally evidenced in the biography. Only those facts that are of significance for the later portions of the thesis have been mentioned.

2. A list of the principal works of Benjamin Franklin makes up the second part of the thesis. This list was incorporated because it seemed advisable to have a definite body of bibliographical material for reference. The list is not complete. It would be nearly impossible to make it so because Franklin wrote an enormous number of miscellaneous articles and works.

3. Franklin's thought has been traced through three principal fields: the literary, the political, and the moral and religious. In this section Franklin's tendencies from young manhood to old age are discussed and the points supported by passages from his own writings and from the writings of his contemporaries.

4. The conclusion deals with the two or three outstanding advances made by Franklin in the growth of his thought. This shows how Franklin changed from a mere utilitarian into a humanitarian, and, at the very end of his life, from a humanitarian into a person with deep interest in the "other world" and in God.





APPENDIX

Franklin's Notable Achievements

1. Edited best newspaper in the colonies--1730.
2. Established the first circulating library in America--1731.
3. Started newspaper advertising--1734.
4. Helped to establish the first fire department--1736.
5. Invented the Franklin stove--1742.
6. Founded the first academy in Pennsylvania--1749.
7. Discovered that lightning is electricity--1749.
8. Caused Philadelphia to be efficiently policed--1750.
9. Reformed the postal service--1753-1755.
10. Prepared the first plan of confederation, i.e., The Albany Plan--1754.
11. Caused Philadelphia to be paved, lighted, and cleaned--1756.
12. Helped to write the "Declaration of Independence"--1776.
13. Performed great diplomatic services, secured French aid--1778.
14. Originator of the "League of Nations", i.e., a plan insuring universal peace--1784.
15. Explained the cure for smoky chimneys--1785.
16. Started the first anti-slavery society--1788.
- \* 17. First to discharge an explosive located at some distance by an electric current sent over a wire.
18. Invented a copying press for taking copies of letters or other writings.
19. Invented double spectacles, near and farsighted lens.
20. Invented the harmonica.

\* The last seven achievements are not dated. No definite date could be found.





21. Started a thrift campaign.
22. Signed all five papers that made America a country.
- \* 23. Parton maintains: "His greatest act was his deliberate choice to dedicate himself to virtue and the public good."

\* The Amazing Benjamin Franklin; J. Henry Smythe, Jr. , page 275.





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Bruce, William Cabell

Benjamin Franklin, Self-Revealed (A Biographical and Critical  
Study Based Mainly On His Own Writings)

G. P. Putnam's Sons

New York and London

The Knickerbocker Press

Date of Publication--1917

This book was used a great deal in my thesis work. It is based mainly upon the works of Franklin himself, and, as I have been reading and studying Franklin's works it was distinctly helpful to get another's impressions of the same.

Eliot, Charles

Four American Leaders

Boston American Unitarian Association

Date of Publication--1906

I merely read through the article on Benjamin Franklin. It contributed to my general information about him.

Fay, Bernard

The Apostle of Modern Times (With Illustrations)

Little, Brown, and Company, Boston

Date of Publication--1929

The book was probably the most helpful of all that I studied.





Fay dealt with Franklin from the utilitarian point of view. He stressed the importance of his masonic, sentimental and religious lives. Others authors have rather neglected the sentimental and masonic sides.

Hay, John

The Addresses of John Hay

The Century Company, New York

Date of Publication--1907

This book contained an appreciation of Franklin given by John Hay. It served merely to stress the importance of his European service.

McMaster, John Bach

Benjamin Franklin

Houghton, Mifflin Company

Date of Publication--1887

This book was used for the information it gave concerning Franklin's personal habits and writings.

Morse, John T. Jr.

Benjamin Franklin

Houghton Mifflin Company

Date of Publication--1889

Merely read for additional information. Not particularly illuminating.





Sainte Beuve

Portraits of the Eighteenth Century (translation)

A. P. Putnam

Date of Publication--1905

This was very good. It gave a European glance at Franklin and was of great help to me when I was dealing with Franklin's European career.

Smythe, Albert Henry

The Life and Writings of Benjamin Franklin--10 volumes

The Macmillan Company, New York and London

Date of Publication, 1905

This immense undertaking of Smythe's was my chief source  
are  
of information. There/collected here all of the written  
works of Franklin. Since my thesis is based mainly upon  
material and facts I have gleaned from his writings, this  
book was was invaluable.

Smythe, J. Henry Jr.

The Amazing Benjamin Franklin

Frederick A. Stokes Company, New York

Date of Publication--1929

Here Smythe has collected a series of essays written  
about Franklin. They all deal with a different side of the  
versatile man and were written by some of our leading present





day authors, business men and politicians. They are all very complimentary to Franklin, and I felt that not always could I look upon them as unprejudiced accounts.

Van Doren, Carl

Benjamin Franklin and Jonathan Edwards

Charles Scribner's Son--1920

The introduction served me as a well written view of Franklin's practical side.

The Benjamin Franklin Gazette

International Benjamin Franklin Society--1930

This gave contemporary opinions of the man. It was quite valuable.







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